



# Met My Bear to Discover I'm Pregnant: A Why Choose Mpreg Shifter Romance

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**Category:** LGBT+

**Description:** I was hit by a train and woke up in another world—one where I was famous!

Carving out a place in a brand-new world hasn't been easy, not even with my mate Dante by my side. But I did it... we did it. My life's better now than it's ever been, especially since discovering I'm having a baby! A small part of me worries that I'm going to wake up and have it be a dream. No one deserves to be this ridiculously happy.

When I run into Gideon, my life flips upside down. I have a wolf mate I love and cherish and who was there for me when no one else was. That should be enough. Only it isn't. I want them both and fear it means I deserve neither of them.

My two alphas disagree. They tell me I don't have to choose... that I can have both. What am I supposed to do with that?

**Total Pages (Source):** 25

# Page 1

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:39 pm*

“Mate! You’re my mate!”

“Go away.” I grasped my belly, going into protective omega dad mode. No one was hurting my baby, especially not some crazed fan who’d seen me on TV and fantasized I was theirs. Despite my bump, I ducked and weaved through the crowds, hoping to lose that alpha. Grabbing a rail, I descended into the subway.

I was trying to put as much distance between me and my stalker, but going down into a big tunnel and then onto a train where I’d be trapped wasn’t the most sensible plan. I refused to go home, not wanting the guy to know where I lived, though he might have those details already. There were fan blogs with deets of many TV stars. I still couldn’t get over how behind Tarrin was with the internet, compared to the before time. Apps were almost unheard of and businesses gave me strange looks when I asked if they had one.

When I reached the concourse, the scent of the alpha followed my every step as I waddled to the platform to wait for the train to take me where Dante and I got my ID card. Those guys conducted dodgy business, so I figured they might be able to scare off my stalker.

But when someone offered me his seat, I hunched my shoulders, staring at my feet with my hoodie pulled over my head. It wasn’t just that the guy was following me and called me his mate, though that was scary. But his scent wasn’t like any other, not even Dante’s. Each shifter’s smell was unique, and Dante’s combined with my human scent—whatever that was—to produce a “mate” aroma.

The man following me had a scent that, while different to my mate’s, was alluring,

tempting me to stop and inhale it. But it couldn't be. I had a mate I adored, the father of our baby, my one and only, forever and ever. Tears dripped from my eyes onto the floor, and I shoved my boots over the droplets, not wanting anyone to notice and ask if I was okay.

If they did, they might recognize me, and that could become a thing and give the stalker a chance to get close and take a pic. With me. Gods, he might pretend he was my mate and steer me away from the crowds to do who knew what...

My heart was galloping like a runaway horse. I expected to see it take off and race along the carriage, leaving me to draw my last breath.

A voice in my head told me to stop and act not only like a grownup but also like a dad-to-be. I couldn't freak out and hope someone would save me, as Dante did that first day. As a parent, protecting our little one was paramount. I'd allowed that stranger to take control, sending me into a panic. Now, I had to wrest it back and lose the guy, or get Froom and his associates to chase him off.

My phone weighed heavily in my pocket. I could have phoned Dante but didn't because I refused to admit how the stranger's scent was so enticing. My mate would never hear about this, or if he did, I'd be relating the tale on our child's eighteenth birthday while leaving out the details of how the scent made my limbs like jelly.

As my breathing evened out, my gaze moved from my boots to a pair across from me. Without lifting my head, I was certain they belonged to him. They were not out of the ordinary, not overly expensive or ragged with scuffed toes. Just a pair of unremarkable shoes, except they had a hint of him.

If Froom set the guy straight and sent him on his way, maybe I could get home, never to leave again. Our baby wouldn't care if they lived their entire life in our apartment, never walking on grass or smelling flowers or going on a train or bus, would they?

I was freaking out again, and I gulped in huge breaths trying to calm my frazzled nerves. Maybe this wasn't such a great idea, because with each stop, people got out, leaving fewer passengers on the train. There was no way I could lose my stalker unless I was in a crowd.

As the train approached my stop, I did something I'd never done, something I avoided and steered away from whenever possible. I got up, avoiding the alpha's gaze, and pulled off my hood. Smiling at a couple who were standing near the door, I stood close to them, hoping they'd watched my TV show.

The seconds passed as one glanced at my face and looked away. There was a nudge and the second guy flicked his eyes in my direction. His mouth gaped, and I smiled broadly, hoping they'd say something.

"Are you Kai?" one asked tentatively.

I nodded, and he clasped his friend's arm and squeed. The three of us got off the train. They took selfies and asked for my autograph.

"Can we tell our friends? They work nearby, and they'd love to meet you."

"Of course," I gushed, conscious of that man, my stalker, a few paces behind.

We climbed the stairs, one of the pair holding my arm. "Your pregnancy is why you were written out of the show, right?"

"Something like that."

They guided me into a store, not Froon's, and sat me down. Someone produced tea and cakes, and we chatted while I kept a watchful eye outside. He was there, lurking, and whenever a customer walked in, his scent snuck in, too. At least, I thought it did.

The store owner, Adan, was so tickled to have me visit, he offered me a ride home, saying his car was out back. I accepted the ride and crossed my fingers that my rabid fan wouldn't follow.

But as Adan maneuvered his car in the traffic and chatted about my show, I mourned the loss of the scent, that stranger's scent, the one who said I was his mate.

How could that be?

## Page 2

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:39 pm*

I liked my job well enough. The people were great, the pay was great, and I was good at it... Usually, I was good at it. Today, I couldn't seem to get out of my own way. I wanted to be with Kai, not here. But missing him wasn't new. The past five minutes of not being able to accomplish anything was very new.

Checking my calendar to see what meetings I had scheduled wasn't normally a difficult task. It took the click of two buttons. And here I was trying to get in for the third time and still not knowing what the rest of my week looked like.

It wasn't that there were tech issues or I was missing my mate too much. If it were either of those things, I could easily explain away my struggles and move on with the rest of my day. But for some reason, my brain wasn't working quite right.

Every little sound—my colleagues' keyboards nearby, the squeaking of chairs, the pinging of notifications—was distracting me to the point that I couldn't get the simplest tasks done. I closed my eyes briefly and looked to my wolf for comfort. Instead, I found myself comforting him. His anxiety was through the roof, which explained my sensory overload.

It was weird, though. He'd been anxious before, but this was different. Usually, when he felt this way, I did too. But today, I had no idea why, and that was messing with me—messing with me to the point I couldn't even look at my stupid calendar like a normal person.

“Fuck!” I closed my eyes again and took a few deep breaths.

“What?”

I turned around and saw a delivery person looking at me with confusion. “Sorry. That was not at you. I’m just having a day.”

“I know. I can scent your wolf.”

Apparently, I was having a much worse day than I realized if those near me were scenting my beast.

“Sorry,” I called to him as he spoke to a colleague. My wolf needed out, and thank gods I worked in a place that accommodated our animal side.

I headed downstairs to hit up the courtyard for a shift. If he could scent me, the odds of me losing control of my wolf were high. I’d have a lot more to worry about if he was wandering around the office, that was for sure. A run should help him—I hoped.

Two minutes later, I reached my destination and rushed outside. I barely had my clothes off when my beast broke through. Had we been anywhere else, we’d be hunting. But between his mood and being at work, it was likely that a smaller shifter would be hurt if we did. I didn’t need that guilt on top of this wretched feeling building inside of me.

Kai.

Kai.

I froze.

What about Kai? Please don’t let this be about Kai.

Now that Kai was pregnant, my protectiveness had kicked in, more so than when we first met. Hearing this from my beast was only ratcheting up that feeling.

Kai.

My wolf was not being helpful at all. All I could pinpoint was that he was worried, but about what and why now? My and Kai's bond increased during the pregnancy. Was my beast picking up something through that?

I forced a shift and gathered my clothing. I wasn't going to get answers this way. I needed to talk to Kai. I was only partially dressed when Trevor barged into the courtyard, calling my name.

"Crisis in the house!"

"Can't a guy get his wolf on in peace?" Had I thought there was an actual crisis, I'd have been less upset. But Trevor thought running out of coffee was a crisis. He didn't have the same barometer I did.

"You can, but we are being called into an all-staff meeting in ten minutes. It was added to your calendar this morning."

Of course it freaking was.

"Fuck. It is a crisis." Or at least, they thought it was, which in this case was the same thing.

I threw on the rest of my clothes.

"I told you it was." He rolled his eyes. "You never believe me."

"Because you always cry wolf."

He rolled his eyes again. Didn't make me wrong.



I took out my phone, and as we walked toward the elevator, I typed away.

Just checking to see how your day is going. I miss you.

Realizing I needed more reassurance than a text could provide, I deleted it and hit call, walking past the elevator and taking the stairs instead to make sure I had reception. Trevor called after me, but I ignored him. This was more important than being a couple minutes later because I took the stairs.

The phone rang and rang, eventually going to voicemail. Not sure how to leave a message that wouldn't add stress to his day, I hung up. He'd see that I called and phone me back... soon. He was probably on the train and out of the reception area, anyway. At least, that was what I was holding on to. If he didn't call soon, I'd shoot him a text after my meeting.

My resolve didn't last long before I sent him a text, shocked at how much time had passed since my wolf started to freak out.

Not wanting to be late for whatever shitstorm awaited me, I ran the rest of the way, walking into the meeting just as they were getting ready to close the door. I was itching to leave, but what could I do? Wander the city and hope I crossed paths with Kai on his outing? It was best I stayed put, as much as I hated it.

My boss called for attention and the head of HR began some spiel about a new procedure. Nothing he said couldn't have been an email. But there I stood, pretending to care as I held my phone, hoping for Kai to get back to me.

When the question and answer portion of the meeting began, I, like probably eighty percent of the room, crossed our fingers no one had any. Of course, people did, and when the attention was on the opposite side of the room as Harry asked something about paperwork, I slowly worked my way toward the door, hoping to sneak out

unnoticed.

Out of nowhere, a wave of comfort fell over me. Everything was okay. Good even. I wasn't sure how I knew it, but there was zero doubt within me. Kai was safe and happy.

Kai.

Kai.

Kai. I sensed nothing but relief and love pouring off my wolf. He agreed with my assessment.

Kai was fine. I'd been worrying over nothing. I was sure of it.

## Page 3

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:39 pm*

I locked the door of the apartment and put a chair against it like I'd seen in the movies. Though, when Dante and the people of Tarrin were watching my life, and I was eating popcorn and watching movies, who were the movie actors watching? My head hurt trying to figure it out.

I hadn't done that in a while because I went round and round and there were no answers. Or maybe there were but not for people like me with little power to peel back the layers of lies and subterfuge.

Closing the curtains dimmed the light in the apartment and comforted me, as though someone had wrapped a blanket, just out of the dryer, around my shoulders. After making a pot of tea, I crept into bed, alone with my thoughts, and sipped the hot liquid.

Safely ensconced in the bedroom where Dante and I made love, resulting in my pregnancy, I ran through the events starting from when I left the baby store. I'd been on a high, my nesting instinct sated, until I caught a scent.

My head shot up, convinced he was there because I caught a whiff. But when I sniffed my shirt, the alpha's aroma lingered on the fabric, so I pulled it off.

Ridding myself of my remaining clothes, I tossed them in the trash and showered, scrubbing my skin until it glowed pink. I changed the bedding too because I'd been in the covers and put it on the hottest wash cycle.

Back in bed, I felt for my phone. I hadn't checked it in hours and fumbled for it in the mess of fresh bedding. My heart rate increased, thinking I'd lost it until a little voice

in my head reminded me I'd thrown away my clothes.

Oops!

Damn. After grabbing my phone from my pocket, I scrolled through unanswered message after message with tears spilling over my cheeks. Not only had Dante been trying to get a hold of me, but he'd sensed something was wrong. Even if I'd never believed it previously—and I did—the universe had sent me a sign that Dante was my one and only. Forever and ever.

I read and re-read every text, falling more in love with my mate. He not only cared for me but somehow sensed when I was in trouble and needed him.

I'm fine. Forgot to check my messages. Just had an "I'm pregnant and I cry over the tiniest things" moment. Love you to the moon and back.

Returning to bed, I pulled the clean bedding to my chin and sipped the lukewarm tea. Ewww. I was exhausted and didn't want to brew any more. And instead of thinking about Dante and our life and how I'd successfully carved out a career with my blog, my mind wandered to the other guy, the alpha stalker. Or was he a stalkerish alpha?

None of his scent remained on my bedclothes, but my memory reached back to earlier when his scent clung to me, trying to recall the fragrance notes.

"No, dammit. That's not how this works. Dante is my fated mate and the father of my baby." I cradled my bump with one hand and shook my fist in the air with the other.

After landing in Martslock and my life being turned upside down—literally—mating with Dante and finding purpose in my new life acted as a salve. Those terrifying and confusing early days were a thing of the past. But now, the alpha who'd followed me had opened up those memories, and they flooded into my head until I pulled the

covers over me, seeking solace in the darkness.

I hated how my mind reeled me in to that alpha's freaking scent every time I concentrated on my current happiness.

The ringing phone jolted me up, my eyes darting left and right, thinking the alpha had found where I lived and my phone number. But I forced myself to check the display, and my anxiety level plummeted.

Dante!

"Hi." I kept my voice even so as not to alert him to how shaken I was.

"Thank gods, Kai. I was worried when I couldn't get a hold of you. I almost went to the store, thinking you were lost in swarms of different-colored sleepers and onesies and all things baby."

"I..." Start again, Kai. My voice was octaves higher than usual. "I was. Yes, indeedy." What the fuck? Indeedy? I sounded like a character from an old-timey movie.

"Are you okay? You sound as though you're in a tunnel."

I cleared my throat. "I'm at home in bed." Oops. Shouldn't have said that. Since being pregnant, I'd taken day time naps on the sofa but not in the bedroom, using the excuse to Dante that I missed him when he wasn't beside me.

"Kai, what are you not telling me?" The phone crackled, and a voice in the background asked my mate for a file.

"Nothing." Did that make sense? I wasn't telling him nothing. Not grammatically

correct and a double negative... meaning that... I did have something to hide? My head hurt as I recalled my high school English teacher drumming rules into us. She'd be shaking her head if she could see me now.

"I'm coming home."

"Dante, no!" But he hadn't ended the call and was talking to a colleague, saying something about how he'd finish his current project this evening. "Dante, can you hear me? There's no need to leave work early. I'm fine."

My squeaky voice was anything but, and I dashed out of bed, checking myself in the mirror. Pale, tear-stained cheeks, hair sticking out at all angles after I'd run my fingers through it, eyes red from rubbing them and the skin on my nose raw from blowing it. Hardly the picture of health.

I threw water over my face, expecting to be greeted by a brand-new me when I checked the mirror. Instead, I was the same person but with droplets of water dribbling over my face and onto my paternity shirt.

What would Dante think when he saw me, and what possible explanation could I give my mate?

## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:39 pm*

Shit. Shit. Shit. Shit. Shit.

I never thought I'd meet my mate only to have him be carrying another man's baby. It wasn't a game changer. My mate was my mate, and I could and would love the baby growing inside him as my own. But my mate and I weren't the only ones in the picture, and I had no idea what to do with that.

There was also the small matter of him fleeing from me and... oh yeah, the fact that he was famous. I'd heard he moved to town after his show was canceled. I followed the gossip posts as much as the next guy. But I wasn't one of those die-hard fans, the ones who wore his sweatshirts and knew his favorite candy. He was only an actor.

Who cared if I found a connection with his character? They were make-believe, right? Sure, I found him charming on-screen and had my share of nocturnal fantasies about him. But I could tell the difference between real life and fantasy.

Only now that I met him, I couldn't. I was mixing up the person he played on TV with the person I just met, the one whose scent was still wrapped around me, calling to my beast and begging me to come find him. Mixed with that scent was a tinge of fear, though. And that was the reason my feet stayed fully planted on the train car floor instead of chasing after him as he rushed onto the platform.

I got off the train just as they announced the doors were about to close and took a seat on the bench. I stayed there for hours. I kept hoping he'd realize who I was and have second thoughts about dashing away and that he'd come back. But he never did, and I could see security starting to worry about why my ass wasn't going anywhere.

When I finally did head home, I dragged my feet. It was as if walking through my door would mean I officially gave up. I wasn't giving up, though. I just didn't know what to do next. Sure, kissing him and telling him he was mine popped into my head time and time again, but that wouldn't end well.

Kai had someone in his life, someone he cared enough about to get pregnant by. Me going up to him and kissing him breathless had a better probability of getting me slapped in the face than earning his devotion. There had to be a better way.

I opted to take the bus home, hoping that I'd see him along the way or catch his scent again. It was foolish. What if I did? It wasn't like it would change anything. He wanted to be away from me, and I had to let him do that.

And it sucked.

Double sucked.

Triple sucked.

How much sucking was there? Because it sucked that much and more.

My bear wanted out. He wanted to run and swim and catch some prey, and then he wanted to find Kai and present our hunting victory before him. Unlike me, he didn't understand the complexities of this situation. To him, mate meant mate. Done. There was nothing more to it.

I sort of wished that I could look at it so simply. How much easier that would make all of this for me. Only it wouldn't be easier for Kai.

"Fate, why are you doing this to me?" I scented the air one last time as the bus pulled up to the stop. He hadn't been here, at least not in the recent past. I climbed on board



and found my seat.

I took out my phone. I tried to tell myself that I just wanted to see him. I wasn't going to be creepy and look for him or anything.

Probably.

No. I wasn't. He deserved better than a mate who stalked him.

A few taps got me to one of his many fan pages. I should've known better than to head in there. The amount of fiction written about him blew my mind. But what shocked me more was how jealousy grew in my belly at seeing person after person's wet dream on the internet for all to see. Sure, some were just silly little stories about customers he'd met and their interactions, but most of it had either the word erection or cock in the first few paragraphs.

It was my own fault. I shouldn't have read any of them.

"Oh, have you read the one by KaiLover529Z?" The man behind me nearly made me drop my phone.

I turned my phone over, clenching my jaw as anger bubbled inside me. How dare he read about my mate, even if it was a fictional account.

"No." I stood as the bus slowed. It wasn't even my stop. I didn't care. I needed to get off the stupid thing and away from the man who I was irrationally angry at. "You really shouldn't read things like that." As if I hadn't just been doing the same thing. Maybe not for the same reason, but that didn't change anything.

I stomped off the bus like a teen who was pissed at their parents, not even listening to his rebuttal. I didn't care what he had to say. The thinking part of me understood that

he did absolutely nothing wrong.

Once outside, I changed my plans. Going home and being stuck inside wasn't going to lead anywhere good because I'd spend every second on the phone looking for information about Kai, or worse, in my head spiraling.

Let's go run and swim. My bear loved taking his fur, and it would get his mind off Kai.

Mate.

Find.

This is your time outdoors to do as you wish.

And to be sure my bear wouldn't get the wrong idea, I took us two hours outside the city to our favorite place before letting him loose. The mountains were our sanctuary. When the noise of the city became too much, we always ended up here. It was the calm we needed.

Maybe that was why I was struggling so much with figuring out this mate stuff. It had been too long since I let my fur out. I knew better. Lesson learned.

I left my clothes in the car and jogged into the clearing where I called forth my bear and ran to our favorite lake.

## Page 5

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:39 pm*

Dante burst through the front door earlier than I expected, catching me by surprise.

I'd planned to be in the living room, flicking through a magazine or watching TV when he arrived. He must have run from the subway.

I struggled to get out of bed, but my feet got tangled in the sheets, and I cursed, hoping the baby didn't hear me.

"Stay where you are." Dante collapsed on his knees beside the bed and took both my hands. "I was so worried when you didn't answer."

I shrugged and avoided his eyes. Since we'd mated, he'd had an uncanny ability to read behind my gaze. He'd suss out that I was fibbing if he looked into my eyes.

"You know me and anything baby. I lost track of time surrounded by clothes and equipment." I hoped he was buying it and wouldn't pester me for more details.

"Did you lose your sense of hearing?" He picked up my phone and waved it in front of me.

I giggled, or tried to. It sounded as though I was gagging. "All things baby involve sight and touch. Maybe smell, too." That would change once our little one arrived, but in the months I'd been carrying the baby, the colors and textures of the clothing was paramount.

"Nope." He lifted my chin, and I couldn't avoid his piercing gaze. "You have to come up with a better story than that. Preferably, the truth."

Hunching my shoulders, I let the tears flow because I was about to destroy the man who was my everything. I adored him, and when I told him about the stalker's intoxicating scent, my explanation would rip out his heart and stomp on it. This man saved me when everything was torn away. But most importantly, he was my one and only, the father of our child, the one alpha in this world or any other who was my mate.

How could I tell him I'd been attracted to another alpha's scent? I couldn't. But I also couldn't think of a plausible excuse.

"Is the baby healthy?" He cupped my belly.

I nodded. My lips pressed together as I kept the truth prisoner inside me.

"Then tell me. No matter how bad it is, my love for you won't waver."

How wrong he was.

"There was a stalker." The words gushed out of my mouth without permission.

Dante glanced at the window. "That's why it's so dark in here and there was a chair against the door. I wasn't certain of its purpose."

Maybe if I could convince my mate my confusion was due to an overexcited fan, we could get past this without me spilling all the details and losing Dante in the process.

I rested my tear-stained face on his chest. The familiar pattern of his heartbeat reassured me we were going to be okay and that I wasn't about to become a single dad.

"But there's more." He wrapped his arms around me, my baby bump rubbing against

his belly.

Damn my mate and his ability to wring information out of me. I was staying strong and refusing to admit the truth.

“What was so special or different about this fan? Did he touch you? Was he someone from the before time?” He leaned back, searching my eyes, his wolf at the forefront of his gaze.

Oh gods, my news would devastate my mate and his beast. They’d fall like pins at a bowling alley.

“He smelled kinda different.” Either Dante would think the guy never bathed or... or he’d pick up that my distress was woven in with... something else. Lust, maybe?

“Good different?”

Damn that alpha and his ability to ferret out secrets.

“Maybe.” I fiddled with his shirt button, undoing it and buttoning it again.

“Kai?”

My eyes welled with tears as I pictured the life we’d built together being snatched away and a door slamming in my face.

“His scent was... alluring.” I counted the seconds until my mate replied. One, two, three.

“That’s not so bad.”

My shoulders trembled as sobs wracked my body, and I clawed at Dante's shirt. "Yes, it is. You are my mate, the love of my life. No one can come between us."

I followed Dante's gaze to my bump, and he giggled. "You sure about that?"

"Stop making light of this." I smacked his arm, grateful for the distraction but understanding I couldn't back out and avoid the truth. I had to be looking at Dante when I told him everything and witness the hurt and pain in his eyes, the result of what I'd done to him. "He said I was his mate."

"Okay. Is that it?"

There must've been something wrong with my mate's hearing. I just dropped a truth bomb in his lap, and he was acting like everything was hunky dory. I was tempted to shake him but held back.

"What do you mean by is that it? A stranger wants to be with me, to break us up, to ruin the life we've built together, and you just shrug it off?" Now I was mad at Dante for not being angry. What was wrong with me?

"Kai, it's possible to have more than one mate."

"No." I pushed back at what he was telling me, that the family we had created was broken and the love we shared was nothing special. "I am your mate. You told me I was the only person in this world or any other for you." I was talking through sobs and hiccups.

"True. But omegas are different here in Tarrin. It's possible for an omega to have more than one mate."

No way was I agreeing to be shared like an old-fashioned harem in the human world

with husband number one, ten, and a hundred and fifty juggling for a night with the alpha.

“I am a one-mate omega. No one will ever replace you in my affection.”

Dante took me in his arms. “We’ll see.”

## Page 6

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:39 pm*

I'd been officially spending more time in the mountains than in the city. At first, I drove straight from work and then came right back here as soon as my workday was done. The next morning, I'd stop at home to shower and change. Repeat. But yesterday, I called in sick and said I'd be back as soon as I was able. At the rate I was going, it wouldn't be tomorrow either.

It wasn't helping the way I needed it to. And yet, I kept doing it, hoping for a different result. I knew better. Instead of forgetting about our run-in with our mate, my bear was getting more and more insistent that we find him. Of course, he freaking was—it was his nature. On this point, he was wiser than me, for sure. I didn't know why I thought we'd eventually turn a corner and things would suddenly be sunshine and roses or at least heading in that direction, but I'd somehow managed to convince myself that that was the case.

There was one thing the trips did do, though. They kept my beast at bay-ish. The times I needed to be in my skin, he allowed it and didn't push back. He wasn't pleased, and he did fare better when I let him out. But there wasn't any danger of him pushing through and taking over while I was in a meeting or anything like that. Small victories were still victories, right? Only it wasn't a victory, not really.

He was miserable.

I was miserable.

Something had to change.

It was time to face reality. My mate was still out there, and the longer I was away



from him, the harder it was going to be to hold myself together. I didn't want to be one of those people who hunted him down, looking for posted sightings on the internet as a way of tracking him. Or worse, be that guy, the one stalking the object of my desire and then when I found him, begging him to keep me even after he already left me standing there. Why couldn't we have met, said hello, and then lived happily ever after? Was that too much to ask?

I was at the point where I was coming to terms with the fact that I couldn't go on like this. Something had to give... and soon.

If...no, when we found each other again, we'd have a conversation, and if he told me, "No, I don't want to be with you," I'd figure it out then.

But for all I knew, he was feeling the same way, too. Maybe he was out there looking for me, but unlike me, he didn't have the advantage of knowing my name. He'd be looking for a needle in a haystack.

And there was also the possibility that he didn't know who I was or that I was anything other than some weird guy looking at him, longing for him, and calling him mate. That would explain his departure.

In a way, that was the best-case scenario. He wasn't rejecting me even though he knew I was his mate. He was just some guy who got scared when meeting an overzealous fan. That could be a thing, right? It didn't have to mean he full-on rejected me.

My bear ran and ran and ran until he couldn't run any more. Then he jumped into the lake and looked for fish to eat. And once he succeeded, he climbed out of the water and did it over and over again. When he finally became bored of that, he began to run around the lake some more.

By my third time around the lake, I pushed at him to swim again. He ignored me. Then I suggested he grab one of the foxes we scented. Once again, he ignored me. I offered him option after option. None were good enough for him. He was going to run in circles and that was that. Nothing was settling my beast today. It was time for me to give up and just do what needed to be done from the beginning. Find Kai.

It was a risk—a huge risk. Right now, there was the possibility we might one day be together. All hypothetical, obviously, but it was there. I could destroy that if I wasn't careful. I might catch up with him and his immediate response could be to flee again. What if I looked him in the eye and told him that I was his and I wanted him to be mine, and he said no? Then what?

I wasn't sure how I would be able to handle that. It would crush me, break me into a thousand pieces. I'd accept it, but I'd fall apart. Hiding from it wasn't doing either me or my bear any good, though. There was only one way to find out what my future would hold—and that was to find him and have an honest conversation about it.

First, I needed to pull myself together and get my bear to stop running in circles... literally.

It took a while, but I managed and headed back into the city with exhaustion starting to settle in. I parked my car at home, and before heading into my place, I realized I needed to get coffee. If I didn't, I was going to crash hard, and when I woke up, my bear would be at it again. There would be time for sleep, but that time wasn't now.

Thinking of coffee had me remembering a story from when Kai first moved to the city. It was something about him being at a coffee shop and not having any money. I pulled up one of the articles easily and found the location of that coffee shop. If I was going to find him anyway, might as well start at the first place anyone saw him.

He wasn't going to be there this time. It was ridiculous to think so, and his scent

would have long washed away. No one kept a coffee shop unsanitized for that long. It just didn't happen. At least, not without the city shutting them down for health-code violations. That didn't stop me from feeling disappointed when I walked inside and all I scented was a group of teenage boys who had obviously just finished some sort of sporting event and were in desperate need of a shower—and a whole lot of coffee.

I walked up to the counter, ordered my regular, and as I was waiting, I saw him walk by the front window. There was no mistaking it was him. Without even thinking, I ran to find him and I did, at the door. He'd been coming here, after all.

“You!” And suddenly, everything felt right. All it took was one single word.

## Page 7

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:39 pm*

Days had passed with no contact from the stalkerish alpha. Was I a little disappointed he hadn't tried to find me? No. Absolutely not. No way. No. No. No.

But that pesky little voice that popped up when I least wanted it to told me to stop ignoring what I was feeling.

I closed my eyes and told said voice to butt out of my life.

Dante had been working from home since the incident. But he'd returned to the office today, and I was sitting at the computer, uploading photos to my blog. But my mind kept wandering to the alpha who'd followed me. Being with Dante had taught me about shifter scents, and while I couldn't tell what animal he had inside him, I was certain he was a shifter.

A frisson of excitement whisked through me, followed by guilt. I was mated to an alpha I adored, and despite what he said about omegas having more than one mate, I couldn't wrap my mind around it. I'd given my heart to Dante. I didn't have any space left over for another alpha. And how would my beloved feel having to share me with another guy?

Ewww! If it were me, my skin would be tinged with green, my teeth would be ground down to nubs, and my blood pressure would be off the charts.

I pushed my chair back, unable to concentrate on my blog. It was a beautiful day, and I missed my regular walk to the café for my one coffee a day. I hadn't left the house since that day but was peeved I was giving the unknown alpha so much power over my life.

Grabbing my phone, I looked in the mirror near the front door. My paternity shirt was rumpled, and my hair needed brushing. The voice niggled me, saying I was hoping to see the guy and wanted to look my best. But I protested and told it to buzz off. Did other humans have conversations with their conscience? Unlike Dante and his beast, my voice usually pissed me off and wasn't a companion but a giant pain in the ass.

Getting outside and breathing in the city fumes wasn't the same as the country air in the before time, but I didn't let my mind wander to my previous "life" very often and pulled my thoughts back, concentrating on which coffee I was going to buy.

But as I went to push open the coffee shop door, that scent, the one that both confused and intoxicated me, greeted me, almost knocking me over. I teetered in my sensible sneakers and my vision blurred, thanks to that damned scent, but a hand grasped my elbow and steered me outside.

I coughed and dabbed the tears streaming over my cheeks with a tissue. Blinking the rest of the tears away, I studied my rescuer. It was him! Of course it was. Who else's scent would make me almost lose consciousness and keel over?

"You!"

"You," he mimicked.

Hmmm, for a guy who thought I was his mate, I wasn't impressed with his conversational ability.

My gaze lowered to his fingers as they gripped my arm, and he let go. Part of me was disappointed at losing the skin-to-skin contact.

"You're pregnant."

Huh? Did he think I had a basketball under my shirt? I bit back my snarky response. I supposed with me rushing away, holding a bag against my belly might have hidden it. But perhaps he was more interested in me than my body.

“Yes.”

I expected him to respond with, “Sorry to bother you,” and rush off, muttering he’d made a terrible mistake.

“You have a mate.”

Again I resisted the temptation to blurt out something scathing, and repeated, “Yes.”

“You’re human.”

I sighed. This conversation was going nowhere fast, and I refused to give the same one-word answer again. “You scared me the other day.”

His brow furrowed, and his eyes glistened with unshed tears. “I’m sorry, but my beast scented you in the crowds and urged me to find you.” He then explained that he’d always been able to control his animal but not that day. “Instinct told me to protect you, not frighten you. I hope you can forgive me.”

If I hadn’t been mated to a shifter, I’d have had the guy arrested, but I’d witnessed that feral drive which overrode all other emotions.

“You’re my mate.”

“I got that.” Damn, I had to tamp down my sarcasm.

He sniffed. “Your current mate is a wolf.”

My hackles rose, and I stiffened, drawing myself taller. How dare he use “current” as if he could change it to “past” or “former.”

“He is my mate, my one and only mate.” My teeth clamped on my bottom lip, trying to stifle the rest of the sentence, which was “But I am drawn to you in a way I don’t understand.”

“Humans cannot fathom how an omega could be with more than one alpha. They call it cheating, I believe.”

Gee, thanks for using the C word. Now it was at the forefront of my mind.

“I would never cheat on my mate. He’s the love of my life.” By resting a hand on my belly, I hoped this guy got the hint Dante and I were not only mated but about to become a family.

“Does he know about me?”

I hated all these intrusive questions because they forced me to be honest, and I didn’t want to admit this alpha got my tummy in knots and my insides all squirmy. Only Dante did that. Damn this guy for messing up my life.

“Mmmm.”

“Maybe we should go somewhere and talk, all three of us.”

I pressed a hand over my heart as it responded to what he’d said. It thumped so hard I worried it’d wake the baby.

“Not to our place.” Never there. I couldn’t let this guy sully our home with his scent. It was mine and Dante’s.

But as I nodded my agreement, I caught a peek at his crotch, and my body betrayed me. Slick coated my thighs as my cock engorged.

That was unexpected.



## Page 8

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I still wasn't sure if it was a dream or not. Maybe my bear fell into a deep slumber and all this was my imagination and wish fulfillment. What were the odds that I'd find Kai where he was first seen in the city after his show was canceled? They couldn't be good. Statistically impossible? I might not go that far, but close.

And then to have him agree not only to eat dinner with me, but to bring his mate as well... that was everything. When I discovered he was human and that he didn't just play one on TV, I was worried. He felt the pull, the draw between us, that was clear. But feeling a mating call and being willing to do anything about it were two different things. What if it was too much for him and he tucked away his feelings instead of allowing himself to explore what we had?

Hearing him say that his mate knew about me sent a wave of comfort through me. I wasn't his little secret. He might not know what to do with his feelings, but he wasn't worried about how his mate would react. He was willing to face those feelings head-on, and that meant a ton.

And now they were both coming to my place. We were going to eat, talk, and if all went well, figure out where to go from here. Ideally, it would mean the three of us becoming one mating group, but if that wasn't to be, we'd figure it out.

I stopped at the grocery store on my way home and picked up some basics. I was far from a great cook, but I was pretty good at a few dishes. I opted for something simple yet delicious. I was too nervous not to mess up something complicated.

When I got home and opened the door, the stale smell of no one having been there for the past few days hit me. Other than stopping for a quick shower and change, the

place had been closed up, and there was no hiding it. I opened the windows to air it out and put the groceries away. I didn't have a lot of time, and my list of things to do was quickly growing.

Groceries away, I did a quick cleaning of the bathroom, vacuumed, and dusted. I also changed my bedding. I wanted the place to be more welcoming than it was. But aside from making it clean, there was no time for much else.

I looked around and wondered what my mate would think. Was it too big? Too small? Too dark? Too light? Was the couch firm enough for him? Did it sit too low for him to easily get in and out of as his belly grew? There were so many things to consider when it came to Kai. And on top of that, there was his mate. What did he think about all this? He was a shifter, so he was probably fine with it. Maybe. Gods, I hoped so.

Once that was all done, I took a shower and got changed. I opted not to dress up. I didn't want it to feel like I was trying too hard. But I did put on my best jeans. It never hurt to have your ass looking great. Everything was going beautifully, until it wasn't.

I'd made this meal a bunch of times. It wasn't hard. Cut things up, saute them, make a simple sauce... But today, my nerves were getting the better of me. One thing after another went wrong. I had the heat a little too high. I left it on the flame a tad too long. The veggies were cut up unevenly and were both over and undercooked in the same bite. The sauce was too salty. I even messed up the oven-baked fries. Who did that? If it could be messed up, it was messed up. I wanted to redo it all, but I didn't have either the time or the ingredients on hand to do so.

They knocked on the door just as everything finished cooking. It was so embarrassing. The first meal I ever provided for my mate was a complete and utter disaster, the place smelled like burnt everything, and I had no choice but to serve up

the subpar food. There wasn't anything I could do to fix it other than offering to take us out, and today really needed to be about the three of us talking in private.

"It's not that bad." Was I lying to myself? Most likely, but it was what I had to do. There was the very off chance that I was being a perfectionist and it really wasn't as awful as I was sensing it to be. I was going with that.

I opened the door, and I was hit with his scent. Just being surrounded by it comforted me and made me feel like everything would be okay. Kai was here. His mate was here. The three of us were at the same place at the same time—it was all upward from here.

"Hi, I'm Gideon." I held up my hand to his mate.

"Dante." He shook my hand, all formal like. He didn't squeeze it too hard, and there was no sense of anger or hostility coming from him. I was considering that a positive sign.

There was, however, a nervous awkwardness surrounding all three of us. It made sense. This was a life-changing meal. Or it had the potential to be. Maybe food would take some of the awkwardness away. At least, we would all have something to focus on—even if it was just the mediocre food I was about to serve them.

"You have perfect timing. I just finished cooking dinner. Come in, and I'll show you around real quick. Then we can sit down and eat."

"Yeah, okay." It was the first that Kai had spoken since he came in, and the slight hesitation in his voice told me he was as nervous about this as I was.

Here goes everything.

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I gripped Dante's hand, the warmth of his skin and familiar scent reassuring me that he didn't blame me for any of this while we picked at the food Gideon had made. None of us ate more than a few bites, but needing something to do with my hands, I guzzled glass after glass of water.

Even though my mate had told me many times and I'd read excerpts from magazines and books that omegas could have more than one mate, I couldn't get it through my head that this was a thing. And I'd pointed out how this phenomenon never showed up in the TV shows the citizens of Tarrin watched.

That stumped him, but he shrugged, saying, "That's just TV."

Hardly. But this wasn't the time to argue about how I'd arrived here and what was real.

"Dante and I are fated mates." I pulled down my shirt, showing my mating mark. Cradling my belly, I continued, "And he is my baby's alpha father."

Gideon pushed oven-baked fries around his plate, and he stabbed one, startling me. Dante didn't react. Maybe his wolf warned him a split second before Gideon murdered the poor defenseless potato, though it had been baked, so perhaps it didn't feel a thing.

"I'm not from here." How was I going to explain this? Dante was the only person who knew the truth—whatever that was—regarding the TV serial being my so-called real life.

“I gathered.” Gideon gave up on torturing the fry and smashed a piece of broccoli instead.

Dear gods, it was as though he’d stabbed me in the chest with the fork. My heart couldn’t take this dinnertime massacre, and I moved his plate out of reach.

That was enough of an explanation regarding my history. “Dante is my rock and...” I’d been about to say my first, but I decided against blurting out I’d been a virgin to an almost complete stranger.

My mate and I shared a glance. He gave me a reassuring grin, and I took a deep breath and gathered my courage.

“And as we discussed, I’m human, so mating with more than one alpha is unheard of—” I cut myself off because I’d been about to say that mating with two was surreal. I wasn’t mating this guy, no matter how impressive his cock was under his jeans. Not that I could see it now, but I caught a glimpse outside the coffee shop.

Gideon shot a look at Dante. Hey, I was supposed to be part of this conversation. Were their beasts communicating somehow and leaving me out? If so, I was going to stomp my feet and drum my fists on the table, doing my best toddler impression.

“No sneaky shifty glances, please. I’m the focus here, so you have to include me in any discussions.” I thumped my hand on the table and instantly regretted it. Owwww!

“We’re not communicating,” Gideon huffed.

“Yes and no.” Dante’s head swayed left and right.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” I was ready to bang my plate on the table if they didn’t spill what was going on.

Dante met my gaze. “Why don’t you both spend some time together?”

My mind went to our bed. “Ummm, no. The only person I’m getting naked with is my mate.”

“Not naked.” Dante pecked my cheek, and my heart slowed.

“Not yet,” Gideon whispered, but my hearing had improved since living with a shifter, and I caught what he said.

I squeezed Dante’s hand, tears threatening to fall because it was as though I was being pushed into something.

“Not likely,” I snapped and folded my arms.

“Apologies.” Gideon studied his hands.

I shouldn’t have reacted the way I did as I peeked at his cock. My dick had swelled and slick streamed from my hole, but Dante was my one and only.

“Go out to dinner or have a TV watch-along. Or, since you both enjoy coffee, go to the café for a hot drink and cake.”

But the coffee shop was ours, Dante’s and mine. Meeting Gideon there would besmirch my memories of the day I met my mate.

“A date? You want us to go on a date?”

“No. This is your decision, Kai. It was just a suggestion.” Dante kept his tone even, unlike me with my zigzagging voice.

“I’m willing, but as Dante said, you have to sign off on this.” Gideon fiddled with his water glass.

“What would we do?” I was lost as to the purpose of the proposed meet-up.

“Get to know one another.” Gideon folded his arms and leaned back in his chair. Not far enough for me to see his crotch. Shame!

“If I say yes, there can be no murdering of food or drink.” I sounded more confident than I was, but inwardly, there were butterflies torpedoing my belly.

“Is that a thing where you come from?” Gideon’s question was directed at me, but his eyes went to Dante.

Dante lifted both hands in an “I have no clue” gesture.

I stood up, wanting this evening to be done and to be home in my own bed with my mate. “Maybe we can meet in a park.” But there might be fans who’d recognize me, and I’d end up running home with a trail of people scampering behind me, begging for autographs and selfies. “I’ll let you know.”

I gave Dante a pointed look, and he pushed his chair out. “We should help with the dishes.” Oh gods, how had he misunderstood me? But I couldn’t blame him as I hadn’t used any words.

“No!” I lowered my voice from a shriek to a more normal tone. “I mean, I’m sure Gideon has a dishwasher.” We didn’t, but his place was bigger than ours.

“I do, and it’s fine.” His downcast expression brought on a surge of guilt, and I almost wrapped my arms around him.

“I’ll message you tomorrow about where we should meet.” I tucked my arm in Dante’s.

“Promise?”

“Yes.”

We left, and I was both pleased to breathe air that didn’t contain Gideon’s scent and mourning that it no longer surrounded me.



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I wouldn't have called our dinner a success, but it went far better than I had hoped it would. Sure, the food wasn't great. Kai basically smushed the broccoli and moved the fries around. He didn't touch any of the sauce. But it wasn't about that and never really had been. It was about the three of us connecting.

Dante was great. I really liked him... a lot. He was a nice guy who obviously loved and cared for Kai so completely. It was nice to see my mate had someone protecting him and comforting him during all of this. It must have been so confusing having all of this happening, especially while he was pregnant.

When we decided we'd try going on a date, just the two of us, I had a thousand ideas running through my head. It had to be perfect. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized I was putting so much pressure on myself, just like I had with dinner. And if I continued down this path, I'd probably end up with similar results, only instead of burnt veggies and hard meat, it would be a bad date and regrets.

Instead, I decided to do something a little more personal and a little less high pressure. I knew he didn't want to be recognized while we were out, and that limited our options. His character might not be on the show anymore, but his fandom was running hard. There were petitions all over the place. They were trying to get his character put back on the show by writing the accident and subsequent season as a dream sequence on one and having it be a case where he was saved just in time and had amnesia in another. The character might've been gone from the show, but he was hardly forgotten.

I needed to keep him from having some of that pressure of being famous while we went on our date. I also had to keep in mind that he was pregnant and probably

wouldn't want to do what my bear was begging us to do—go to the mountains and swim in the lake and chill with my bear. That would have to wait for another day. After overthinking it to death, I opted to bring him to my favorite art gallery.

It rarely had people in it anytime I'd been there, unless it was an opening. It was one of those places where if they sold one piece a month, they made their quota and employee salaries and probably a car. That wasn't 100% true. They did have some pieces that were more reasonable, but it was definitely a place where the elite went to spend their money.

I'd always loved art, even if I was as far from an artist as one could get. My stick figures needed work. But I understood art and loved being surrounded by it. One of my college buddies always had pieces at this gallery, thanks to his family being connected to the owners. And because of that, even though I wasn't drowning in jewels and money, I was always welcome.

It took me circling the block three times before I was able to pull up to the curb so I could wait for Kai to come out. I'd have preferred being a gentleman and collecting him at his door, but he'd asked me to wait outside for him. I didn't like it, but it made sense. This was his personal space, and having my scent linger there would potentially be an issue for him as he navigated this situation. I knew it was for me. All I could scent at my place was Kai and Dante. It left me perpetually hard and needy and lonely. I didn't want that for my mate.

He came out and climbed in the car, buckling in right away. He didn't quite meet my eyes. I cracked the window, his scent overwhelmingly fabulous.

“Hi.” He broke the silence.

“Hi.” I turned on the car and flicked the blinker to pull out.

“Where are we going?”

“I thought we could go to an art gallery I like and look around.”

“Okay.”

The conversation was hardly flowing, but at least there were words, right?

“Do you not like art?” I asked. “We can pick something else.” I wasn’t sure what, but we’d figure it out.

“No, I do like art... I just... crowds.”

“This isn’t that kind of place.” I explained all about the gallery and why I picked it. Each sentence had the conversation flowing better, and we reached that side of town fairly quickly, the traffic on my side for once. I found a parking spot with ease, and the two of us walked in. My hand itched to grab his, but we weren’t there yet. And maybe we wouldn’t ever be. I didn’t know. Only time would tell.

Just as I had hoped, we were the only people there when we walked inside. Aside from the owner, that was. He greeted me with a wave and a smile. He never spent much time with me when I was here unless I sought him out. He knew this wasn’t a place where I came to shop, and sometimes, I just came here to clear my head.

I’d told Kai about my friend on the ride over and was excited to show him his work.

“This one’s not for sale,” Kai noted.

“It’s a piece he made honoring his grandmother. He wants as many people to see it as possible. He tried a few museums, but they didn’t have space for it, and the owner here offered this spot.”

“It’s beautiful. Grandparents are...” He choked up, his body leaning slightly into mine, instinctively seeking my comfort.

“Yeah, they are, and it is.”

We spent the next hour looking at all the different pieces, from statues to paintings, from photographs to fiber arts. Each one told a different story, and when we were done, I asked him if he wanted to grab something to eat.

“I think, if it’s okay, maybe take me home,” he said.

I was confused because we were having such a good time, but I didn’t do anything but agree. If he needed to be home, that was where he would be. We had a nice time, and that could be enough for one date.

We were back in front of his place a half-hour later.

“Would you like me to walk you up?” I wanted to, but I wouldn’t push.

“I don’t think that’s...”

The next thing I knew, his lips were on mine, and he was kissing me. It was over just as quickly as it began. That didn’t stop me from thoroughly enjoying it, nor did it keep my bear from coming forward, begging me to make him ours.

“Sorry... I don’t know why.” He fumbled with the door.

“Oh, please don’t be sorry.”

I didn’t want him to be sorry. Anything but that.

“I gotta go.” And then off he went, out of the car and straight inside the building, leaving me more confused than I was when I picked him up.

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“I’m so sorry.” Sobs wracked my body, and I fell into Dante’s arms.

We stayed like that, him whispering he had me and nothing bad would happen, and me blubbering, drenching his shirt in tears and snot. Gross.

When my cries subsided, Dante gave me a tissue and led me to the couch.

“Would you like a cup of tea?”

I did, but tea wasn’t going to solve my problems. “Sure.” Anything to put off confession time.

While Dante busied himself in the kitchen, I patted my belly, worried my emotional highs and lows would negatively affect my baby. Would it stunt my little one’s growth? Make them strung out, similar to if I’d been mainlining drugs? Maybe they’d cry all the time because of the adrenaline spiking and ebbing.

But the little one woke up, wriggled as usual for this time of day, and went back to sleep.

Looking out the window, I wondered where Gideon was and if he felt as shitty as I did. I had Dante, my beloved mate, but the polar bear shifter had no one. As I studied the crowds bustling along the sidewalk and crossing the road, my vision shimmered and wobbled, just like my TV used to when it was on the fritz. I used to smack it once, sometimes twice, and it’d be okay.

I gripped the windowsill as the image of outside blurred and a familiar scene

struggled to replace it. It was the store where I worked in Pinedale, and Len was outside chatting to Ted. Len was brushing his fingers over a name tag, mine. I swallowed and blinked, telling the universe this was where I belonged.

The vision vanished and was replaced with the Martslock crowds. Everything was as it should've been, except what was in my head and my heart.

Slumping onto the sofa, I took the hot drink from Dante and sipped. The minty flavor with a hint of sweetness calmed my galloping heart, and I cradled my belly, thankful the baby only stirred but didn't wake.

"Ready to talk about what happened?"

"No." I swallowed more tea. "But I will." Not about the vision or whatever it was. That was probably hormones or anxiety. "It's Gideon."

Dante pulled up a chair beside the sofa and placed his arms on his thighs, leaning forward so our heads were almost touching. I breathed in his cool breath and wanted to capture it, convinced it would show me the way forward and how I could balance my life.

"I gathered. Did you argue?"

I scrunched my eyes closed and gripped the hot mug, wishing we had fought. That would be easier to explain than what really happened.

"Worse."

"He doesn't want to see you again?" My mate's eyes turned dark—his wolf—and his nostrils flared. "Where is he?" he yelled, his menacing voice sending goosebumps sprawling over my skin.

I placed a hand on his arm. “No. Nothing like that.” Taking his hand, I placed it on my cheek, the warmth reassuring me Dante was at my side. “He...” Not he. I couldn’t put all the blame on Gideon. I’d been a willing party to what we did. “We kissed.”

“And?” The rage evaporated from his body and face. The tension left his shoulders, and his expression softened. “Did you sleep with him?”

“Gods, no,” I fumed. “How could you say that?” Was I angry at myself for “cheating” on Dante or furious with him for only getting annoyed when he thought Gideon was gone, never to return?

Those early days in Tarrin had been terrifying and confusing, but maybe that was preferable to what was happening now.

“Then what?” My mate brushed his lips over my brow, and I wished we could go back to the day we met when he saved me and we got to know one another over again, with no second alpha wanting to mate me.

“We kissed.” I studied his face, waiting for emotions to ripple over it. But it didn’t change.

“Did you enjoy it?”

His reaction or non reaction angered me more, and I got up and headed to the window. But remembering what happened when I stood there minutes earlier, I closed the curtains and put my back to the glass.

“Yes, yes, a thousand times, yes.” Was I trying to hurt my mate or just trying to get a reaction?

“That’s good, isn’t it?” His brow crinkled as it did when he was puzzled.



“No, yes, I don’t know. You’re my mate, Dante. I don’t want to leave you for another.” I rubbed my eyes with my fists.

“You won’t. We’re bound to one another forever. Even when we go to the goddess, our love will still exist in the universe.”

This one or the one where Pinedale existed?

Dante led me to the couch and sat beside me. He pulled me close, and I inhaled his scent along with our laundry detergent.

“And Gideon?” My voice was muffled by his shirt.

“Maybe he’s destined to be part of our family.”

I grabbed his face with both hands. “How are you not jealous and ready to kick his ass?”

“That emotion doesn’t exist for Tarrin shifters, one of the reasons it was fascinating to watch *The Secret Lives of Pinedale*. The shouting, crying, the betrayal, the heartache. It was unfamiliar to us and drew us into the serial.”

“Did you want to experience that?” People watched movies, TV shows, and played games for many different reasons, often to block out their real life.

“Gods, no. All that pain and for what?”

“For what? So you’d get pissed at having to share your mate with a second person.” Trying to imagine it didn’t work, but I couldn’t deny I was attracted to Gideon.

“How about I cook a meal and we invite Gideon?”

“In our apartment?” Did I want the guy to see where I lived, where we’d created our baby, observe the room we’d set up for our little one? Not really, but I had to move forward. This limbo wasn’t helping me, my mate, the baby, or Gideon. I had to put my big-guy pants on and find out where this was leading. “How about we meet in a more neutral place?”

I wasn’t ready for Gideon to see how I lived my life with Dante.

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*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:39 pm*

I wasn't sure what to expect after the kiss Kai and I shared in my car. Was it a goodbye kiss? A hello kiss? A kiss designed to test the waters? I had no clue. But I did know that to me, the kiss had been everything and more.

It was as if everything was hinging on our next contact, and every second that ticked by made me more and more anxious. If that was a goodbye kiss, would he even call again? Would his mate? Only time would tell.

When they asked me to meet them for coffee, the relief I expected to feel from them contacting me never came. I felt dread in my belly. Coffee was impersonal at best. Was this the next step to rejection? I wasn't sure and there was only one way to find out... I had to meet with them.

It surprised me that we were meeting at a different coffee shop than the one I'd run into Kai at on that fateful day. As it turned out, that place we met was also where he met Dante. Was there a connection to that? Possibly. But also, maybe he just wanted a muffin he could only get at this location, or possibly he was looking for some more caffeine-free options than the other place had. Maybe they wanted a new place for a new start. There were a thousand possibilities and concentrating on them wasn't going to do me any good.

When the day finally came, I was ready. More than ready. The traffic gods, however, were not ready, and I ended up a few minutes late. When I walked inside, they were sitting in the back corner with Kai facing the wall. It made sense. That would make it less likely for him to be recognized.

I went to the counter, got a cup of coffee, and walked back to meet them. As I

reached the table, I discovered there was already a coffee waiting for me.

“Oh.” I set mine down and took a seat. “I didn’t realize you... Thanks.” I was sure to grab the one they gave me and ignored my own. I didn’t want them to think for even a second that I’d intentionally snubbed their gift. “Sorry I’m late. Both traffic and parking weren’t ideal.”

In hindsight, I should have just taken the bus, but my car still scented like Kai, and it was hard to pass that up, even if it was a pain in the ass.

“No worries. We just got here too.” Dante shrugged.

All three of us were silent for a few seconds, and I couldn’t take it anymore.

“Why are we here? Because if this is goodbye, maybe the band-aid method would be better.” My voice cracked, my emotion too close to the surface for me to hide it.

“No, no, no, no.” Kai shook his head back and forth. “I’m doing this all wrong.” He grabbed his mate’s hand.

“We’re doing this all wrong,” Dante corrected and then gave me his full attention. “We want to get to know you. And maybe, I don’t know, we can be friends.”

Friends was the last thing I wanted to hear, but a friendship with Kai was far better than nothing.

“And before you ask...” Kai looked to his mate who gave him a nod. “I told him about the kiss. He knows.”

“Okay.” I wasn’t sure how to respond and one word it was.

“I know this is confusing to all of us.” Kai waited until I met his eyes to continue. “But I need you to know that there are no hurt feelings. Not a single one. We needed for that to happen.”

“Needed?” I was so confused. He needed to kiss me and now we are going to be friends? Did that mean he didn’t like it?

“I love my world. I love our baby. I love our life together. And then I met you, and suddenly, I’m feeling feelings I don’t think belong.” Kai took a deep breath. “I don’t think I should be feeling like this, and it isn’t how things worked where I’m from.”

He leaned into his mate’s side. “I know I need to embrace where I am. And Dante assures me I should be feeling these things, and it’s okay. It’s how it was meant to be. And I just need to go slowly. So much more slowly than we have been.”

Finally, the pieces clicked into place. He wasn’t throwing me into friendship land, he was trying to figure all this out. And on some level, I already knew this, but the insecure side of me hadn’t quite allowed myself to believe it.

“We’re happy to give that to you.” Dante kissed the top of his head.

“Absolutely.” I didn’t want there to be any doubt in his mind that I was pushing. And if that meant we were all going to try to be friends together for however long it took, so be it. “Let’s embrace a friendship. Let’s welcome it and enjoy our time together and each other’s company.”

Kai’s shoulders relaxed. “Yeah, let’s do that. And maybe the next time we meet, we’ll make you dinner at our place.”

We spent the next couple of hours learning all about each other. I talked about my childhood and my career, as did Dante. But Kai? He shared with me how this was a

whole new world to him, literally. I discovered how he got to be in the coffee shop that day.

No wonder he was so confused. He wasn't even from here, and not here like the city, but here like this entire world. All the little things that were confusing me were starting to make sense. He was brand-new to so much more than having a second mate. And while pregnant? So many changes all at once.

Kai needed time. I'd give him the world—what was a few days, weeks, months, even years? He deserved everything. I could wait. I would wait. Kai was worth it.

I was starting to think that Dante was too.

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Two weeks had passed since the three of us met up.

The baby was growing, awake during the night and kicking my ribs but sleeping during the day. We had to change the little one's routine after the birth. Could we do it before? I'd ask the midwife at my visit later today.

Dante had noticed I rarely stood at the window anymore, when in the early days, I'd been there for hours each day, puzzling over my predicament and studying people's habits, wondering how to get home.

We'd met up with Gideon a few times at the coffee shop and in the park. When away from our apartment, I'd kept hold of Dante's hand, fearing if I let go, I'd be whisked away to another world where Gideon was my mate and Dante didn't exist, except on the TV.

But in the park, Gideon's fingers had brushed against mine and a frisson of excitement rippled through me. I jerked away, conflicted because I'd enjoyed it, but Dante was at my side. Did he experience what I did?

Gideon and I met one more time alone. I'd been buying more baby items, but this was Dante's and my little one. I didn't want to share our child with anyone else. He met me outside the store, and we wandered through the mall, looking in windows, commenting on men's clothes, furniture, and computer games that reminded me of what I'd played in high school.

Nothing that I shared was private, but we learned each other's favorite colors, how we both hated wearing ties, and got caught up in murder mystery novels.

My emotions seesawed from wanting to keep a physical distance between us and needing to inhale his scent and trail my fingertips over the rigid bump at his crotch.

Gideon saw me studying him while he was peering in a shop window, and his gaze caught mine. That twinkle in his eyes that shared the space with what I assumed was his polar bear. It wasn't threatening, just loving, kind, and respectful.

But I laughed inwardly, thinking I could see all that in the alpha shifter's eyes.

"Did you not enjoy kissing me?" Gideon leaned against the glass, his eyes downcast.

"No." Wait, that wasn't the right response. Or did no mean yes? I lifted his chin so our eyes were locked on one another. "I did." He put his hand over mine, and we stood unmoving, me breathing in his unique scent which was so different to Dante's and yet just as alluring.

"Why aren't you two mated? Your scents are perfectly aligned." An older woman with a walking stick paused beside us. "You never know what life is going to throw at you, so don't delay."

She continued walking, her words resonating with me because of my history in the before time.

"Smart lady." Gideon grinned before lifting my hand to his lips, a simple gesture. Desire pin-pricked my body, and I shivered.

He released me from his grip, and we wandered through the air-conditioned space, each of us alone with our own thoughts.

My phone buzzed in my pocket—my alarm indicating I needed to get out of memory lane and on my way to my pregnancy well check. If I didn't hurry, I'd be late for my



appointment.

As I sat in the midwife's waiting room, I regretted not asking Dante to accompany me. He came for the first appointment because we were so excited about the new pregnancy, but it was tempered with fear from it being our first time as prospective parents.

Taking a tissue from my pocket, I wiped my sweat-soaked palms. My right leg trembled and bumped the small table that was piled high with old magazines. Other expectant omegas, each with their alpha partner, glared at me, as if the rattling was a signal something bad was about to happen.

I longed to ask them if they only had one mate, or if they had more, where was the second one? Did only the biological father attend these appointments?

I rifled through the magazines in front of me, hoping to find a Tarrin Omega Pregnancy Handbook, searching for rules. But no one here needed a list of hows and whys. They'd grown up knowing them, maybe with a bio dad and a step-dad, both involved with their omega dad.

The nurse called my name, and I told my thoughts to cool it. This was baby time, not a what the fuck was Kai doing with his life session.

I lay on the examination table and pulled up my shirt, waiting for the midwife to arrive. The midwife didn't use an ultrasound, instead relying on her hands to check the baby's size and if our little one was head down.

She waltzed in with a big smile on her face. She didn't have to worry about being transported to a different world or having people ask for her autograph. But no one in the waiting room had done that. Had they moved on to another serial, no longer interested in reruns? Or had *The Secret Lives Of Pinedale* continued without me? I'd

never asked Dante.

Lucy washed her hands, chatting about the baby's habits, what I'd been eating, and my sleep schedule. But her smile faded when she examined my belly. Gods, no. She didn't have to say anything. Something was wrong.

"Your baby is small. They're not gaining weight. You're not stressed, are you?"

"No," I said through gritted teeth, my lie taking up most of the space in the room.

"Please, can I call my mate?"

"Of course. I'll give you some privacy and be back in a minute."

The phone rang and went to voice message. I dialed again, but there was no answer. A third time, and he still didn't pick up. I was all alone, just as I was when I arrived in Tarrin. But there was someone who I could call. My finger hovered over his number. There was no going back if I got him involved.

"Hello. Kai?"

"Gideon." I held back the tears. "I need you. The baby's in trouble."

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*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:39 pm*

“Gideon.” Kai’s voice cracked, his emotions so close to the surface. “I need you. The baby’s in trouble.”

I already had my keys in my hand the second he said he needed me and was out the door by the time he gave me the address. I raced to the office, grateful that the lights were in my favor and I didn’t pass any patrolmen, considering my speed was not quite within the limits.

I didn’t know why he chose to call me instead of Dante. It didn’t really matter. All I knew was my mate was in trouble, and I was the one he reached out to.

When I arrived, I looked around the waiting area, hoping to spot him. Instead, it was filled with happy omegas and their mates. How I wished that Kai was one of those just sitting there with joy on his face.

I was out of breath, having just run faster than I ever had before up multiple flights of stairs to get to my mate, unwilling to wait for the elevator.

“I’m here for Kai.” I spoke in no more than a whisper, unsure if he wanted the entire group of people sitting in the waiting room to recognize that it really was the Kai who had been sharing the space with them earlier. It probably wouldn’t matter to him, not with our baby at risk, but also, maybe it did. I wasn’t going to chance it.

It didn’t go unnoticed that I slipped and thought “our baby,” instead of “his” or “their.” Being “our baby” was jumping six steps ahead of where we were in our relationship. But at this moment, all I could think about was “our baby.”

“Oh, yes. He’s been waiting for you. Let me take you to him.”

She led me straight to an ultrasound room where he sat on the table, tears falling over his cheeks, his hands on his belly. He was all alone. They left him all fucking alone.

“Oh, honey, what’s going on?”

He hopped off the table and ran into my arms, holding me tightly.

“They think the baby isn’t the right size. They’re too small.” He looked up at me.  
“They’re too small.”

I just held him tightly, unsure how to comfort him other than giving him my love, my affection, and my compassion.

“I have to do a test now. But they had to wait until I had enough water in me.”

I half remembered that ultrasounds needed water.

“And do you now? Have enough water, I mean?”

“Oh yeah.” He forced a chuckle. He didn’t need to be brave, I was here now. “I have so much water in me that I’m about to burst.” He pointed to the empty jug on the counter beside him. He hadn’t been exaggerating. That was enough water for an entire dinner table’s worth of people.

A woman came in a few minutes later. “Your midwife sent me in to measure your baby.”

“Yeah.” He sniffled and went back to the table. I helped him up. He didn’t need it, but I wanted to show him I was here for him, even with the little things.

She explained what she was going to do and then had him lie back. She lifted his shirt, squeezed on some jelly-type goop, and placed the wand on his middle. The room filled with the echo of the baby's heartbeat. I wasn't sure what it was supposed to sound like, but it was quick, strong, and steady. Those all seemed like good qualities to me.

She didn't say a word, moving the wand from place to place, tapping on her keyboard and clicking her mouse. Nothing on the screen made sense to me, and her silence was making my anxiety ten thousand times worse. I had to be strong for Kai, though, so I pushed it down as much as I could.

And I wasn't sure exactly what she was seeing, but as I watched her face, nothing about her looked worried or frightened. But then again, she did this every day. She wouldn't give anything away.

"Okay, I'm gonna go give this to the doctor, and she'll be here in a few moments."

"Doctor? Not the midwife?" Kai pulled his shirt down and rested his hand on his belly.

"The doctor needs to be involved in cases like this."

"Cases like this?" My stomach fell.

"Those that require extra tests," she clarified. It didn't make me feel much better. But before I could ask another question, she left, closing the door behind her.

It was barely shut before an apology flew from my mate's mouth. "I shouldn't have called you."

"No, you should have. I always want you to feel like I'm only a call away. I'm glad

you called me.”

He seemed to take me at my word, and a couple minutes later, minutes that felt like hours, the doctor walked in.

“Well, hello, Dads.” Neither one of us corrected her. “It looks like your baby’s just sitting very oddly. He’s exactly the right size for what he should be. Your little one was just playing tricks on the midwife. Everything’s good.”

Relief flooded through me.

“There’s nothing wrong with my baby?”

“No, there’s nothing wrong. We’re just going to have to not use the old-fashioned methods of measuring you anymore. Because, apparently, your wee one is playing hide-and-seek already. He’s got himself worked into a hidden spot.”

After Kai booked his next appointment, I walked him out. “Thank you for coming.”

“Don’t you need a ride home?”

“I was going to take the subway.”

“Well, I brought my car. I can drive you.”

“I’d like that.”

We walked to the parking garage, and I drove him straight back to his place. He still hadn’t heard from Dante, which had him worrying about a whole different matter than he had been focused on an hour earlier. When we got up and into the apartment, Dante was there with a ziplock baggie in his hand, his phone inside and very wet.

“Hey, I didn’t expect to see you here.” He was talking to me, but there was no anger in his voice. It was just a fact.

“I didn’t expect it either.”

Kai told him all about the midwife’s appointment and how it spiraled into an emergency ultrasound and how I got to be there.

“I’m so sorry I couldn’t be there for you, too.”

Too, not instead of.

“My phone fell in the toilet at work. I think it’s well beyond being rice salvageable at this point.”

“I’ll let you guys get back to talking about...” I wasn’t sure what, but I didn’t want to intrude.

Dante came right over and hugged me tightly. It felt good being there in his arms. A little too good. “Thank you. Thank you for being there for our mate when I couldn’t be. Thank you for being the mate he needed. Thank you for being Kai’s mate.”

And then, suddenly, it was no longer a goodbye hug. It was so much more... and I liked it.

## Page 15

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:39 pm*

Whoa! What was that?

I thought this was all about me, damn it, and after watching both alphas with their hands on one another, I was getting close to a full-blown temper tantrum.

Dante kept assuring me that omegas in Tarrin often had two alpha mates, but what he failed to say was that those alphas might be into one another and leave the omega pissed that they weren't paying him any attention.

What the fuck! They were ignoring me and were handsy. Yikes! I was torn between covering my eyes so I could pretend I wasn't seeing what was in front of me, pulling them apart and yelling, "I'm here. Touch me. Feel me up," or flinging off my clothes and joining in.

And it was hot. Dante squeezed Gideon's ass like he'd done to mine many times. The polar bear shifter groaned and pulled him close. Was I supposed to watch this? Maybe I should go to another room.

My mate's hand slipped under Gideon's shirt and tweaked his nipple. The polar bear shifter's head fell back, and Dante kissed his throat.

"Stop!" My cock was hard, and I was a spectator, not a participant. They glanced at me, their eyes glazed. Lust! That was what I was witnessing. And it was for each other, not me.

"What are you doing?" I folded my arms across my belly.



“I’m thanking Gideon for helping you.” His half-lidded eyes told a different story.

“Yeah, I’m letting him thank me.” While I didn’t know Gideon as well as Dante, his gravelly voice and the way his eyes flicked to Dante suggested he was turned on.

“This is not how we thank someone in my world.” But the before time wasn’t real or just a TV set or... or... or... I couldn’t use that as a measure of what was and wasn’t normal.

“Be honest. Do you... like one another?” This was the weirdest conversation I’d ever had, and considering I’d been transplanted here without my permission, the bar was pretty high.

They nodded while looking at each other.

“Gideon is a good guy, and I’ll never be able to thank him for what he did today.”

Hmmm, it looked as though my mate had figured out how to thank the other alpha.

“When I say like, I’m talking about being turned on.” The answer was obvious, but it was possible I was missing the social clues. I hadn’t socialized with many... make that any... people since I’d been here, other than Dante.

Gideon kissed along Dante’s jaw, and my mate glided a finger over the bulge in the polar bear’s pants. If anyone was examining his crotch, it was me. I was the one destined to see Gideon naked when his huge cock bounded out of his briefs. Unless he wore boxers, but I voted for briefs. And now it appeared Dante would see it first. It was so not fair.

“Hello, hello.” I clapped to get their attention.

“I am.” Dante pressed his lips on Gideon’s mouth, and I clapped a hand over mine to muffle a groan. My other hand went to my crotch and rubbed my arousal.

“You are what?” I could hardly get the words out.

“Turned on.” It was Gideon who answered as they ground their hard-ons against one another.

I slipped my fingers inside my paternity pants—elasticised waist for the win—and stroked my cock while my mate and my maybe mate kissed and fondled one another. Gods, I was going to come in my pants if they didn’t stop. And I didn’t want them to. I was urging them on, wanting them to toss off their clothes and fuck.

They were both alphas, so who would fuck whom first? And they didn’t have slick. They could borrow some of mine because my underwear and pants were drenched.

But they didn’t get undressed. Instead, their bodies swayed as their hands explored and caressed. My hand was tugging and pumping my cock while desire tried to force my eyes closed.

Gideon unzipped Dante’s pants, and my hand sped up. I leaned back on the cushions, my hand pumping my shaft, my breathing quick and heavy. But Gideon’s phone beeped, and he paused.

“Ignore it,” I begged. “Please don’t stop.”

But he pulled away, his lips half an inch from my mate’s, and he mouthed, “Sorry.”

He must have checked his phone, but I was so close to orgasm I didn’t or couldn’t see anything. I was enclosed in a pink bubble of desire, and I groaned as I came, my hand and clothes sticky with cum.

“I have to go. Work.”

I heard the words but couldn't piece together the meaning until a pair of lips kissed my head and the door closed. Dante was beside me. Even with my eyes closed, his scent announced him.

“Would you have fucked if Gideon didn't leave?” I opened one eye. My mate's dreamy expression gave me my answer.

He kissed my brow and slid a hand inside my pants. Despite being covered in cum and slick, he wrapped his hand around my cock and pumped. “Yes. And would you have watched and enjoyed it?”

I said yes without any hesitation while he tugged at my dick and peppered kisses over my face.

“What would you have enjoyed most?”

My thoughts were muddled because I was so close to coming again, but I pictured slathering my slick on Dante's dick before he shoved it in Gideon's ass. And maybe Gideon would have taken my cock in his mouth. The possibilities were endless with the three of us.

“The pair of you fucking.” I grunted as more cum sprayed over me and Dante, and he licked it from his fingers, one at a time. It was so hot.

“Let's get you cleaned up and into bed.” He picked me up, and I nestled into him, two orgasms making me sleepy. “Perhaps next time, all three of us can get naked.”

“When? Let's make a date.”

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*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:39 pm*

My phone buzzed during the last couple minutes of my presentation. I knew it was either Dante or Kai. They were the only ones I didn't have silenced completely. And had I been needed at the meeting even a minute longer, I'd have excused myself and answered it. Instead, I powered through the last couple minutes, dismissed everyone, and pulled out my phone.

Kai hadn't been sending me text messages like I thought. He'd called. I called them right back, wishing I'd left the meeting after all.

"Hey, sorry, I was just finishing up a meeting." I didn't give him time to even say hello.

"Oh, do you need me to call back later?"

"No, no, no, no. This is a good time. I just finished. What's up?"

He didn't sound like he did the last time he called me. There was no fear in his voice. No break in his words.

"I was gonna ask you for a favor. We were going to ask you for a favor."

"Ask away." Whatever it was, I was going to do it. Just having him ask had my heart soaring.

"You know how I was supposed to be gone starting tomorrow?"

I very much did. And while I loved the idea of him being able to travel, having him

do so while pregnant made me nervous. But at the same time, he was a grown-up, and the midwife said he could. He hadn't asked for my opinion, and in this case, it wasn't my place to interject it.

"Yeah, you're going with Dante on his work trip."

"Well, about that... Dante and I had a talk earlier today, and I think it's best if I stay home. I know the scare at the doctor's office wasn't a real scare, but it kind of was, and I'd feel more comfortable staying here."

"That sounds like a good idea." And a huge relief. "Do you need me to bring groceries or something over since this wasn't planned?"

"Well, no... I was more..."

There was a shuffling, and next thing I knew, I heard Dante's voice over the phone. "What my... our mate was trying and failing to ask was... Well, we were thinking maybe you could stay here... with him... and keep him company."

I, of course, immediately agreed and found myself packing that night. Dante was leaving early-ish in the morning, so I packed my car while it was still dark and hit up the 24-hour grocery store. He had hesitated when I asked about groceries, and I wasn't sure if that hesitation was because he had something different to ask me at the time, which he had, or because there was a need. Not willing to chance it was the second, I went and bought anything and everything that I knew he enjoyed eating. The cart was ridiculously full. And I didn't care. It was better for them to have too much food than not enough.

I carried the bags one trip at a time, leaving them outside their door until I had everything. There was no reason to disturb Kai and Dante multiple times. When Kai opened the door, his eyes immediately fell on the bags.

“Are you moving in?” He didn’t say it like it was a bad thing.

My bear perked up.

“Well, you didn’t tell me no on the groceries. You just said that wasn’t why you were calling, so I brought some.” Some being a major understatement.

“I knew I was leaving you in good hands.” Dante came up behind his mate, a smile on his face.

He kissed our mate’s cheek and grabbed some of the groceries. We unpacked the food together as Dante told us about his trip. All too soon, it was time for Dante to say his goodbyes and leave for the week. As excited as I was about spending time with Kai, I was sad Dante’s work had been the catalyst for it.

And then, once he left, I wasn’t sure how to act. An interesting feeling spread through me, like there was a freedom that came with us being here alone together, but also like there was a piece of me missing. Especially now that Dante and I had gotten affectionate. Was that even the word for what had happened last time I walked out this door?

I still hadn’t fully processed it. I knew I liked it, though. And he did too. And based on the way Kai had been responding, he was right there with us in the loving-it department. This wasn’t something for us to jump into, not until after we had some sort of discussion, anyway.

Doing so would’ve been a far cry from the slowness that my mate had requested. It was best to give our feelings time to simmer, especially when it came to Dante. That hadn’t been something I expected, and while I loved it, it also had me a bit off kilter.

I’d taken the day off to spend with Kai, and we spent it watching old movies. I didn’t

fail to notice that Kai didn't watch television shows. He focused on movies, and I wondered if it was because of his part in a television show and how it hadn't been with his consent.

But we snuggled on the couch, watching movie after movie, me plying him with food and water to keep him nourished and hydrated. It was nice.

I was enjoying myself... a lot. But as dinner rolled around, it hit me—every minute that ticked away was getting us closer to bedtime. We hadn't really discussed what that would look like. When I agreed to come, I'd assumed I was going to be sleeping on the couch. But the way we were being together, cuddly and sweet, maybe not. It was all up for him to decide.

Whatever he chose was fine, but I knew one thing, I couldn't think of anything better than sleeping with him in my arms.

## Page 17

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:39 pm*

I was standing at the sink with warm water running over my hands, but they were sweating.

A prickling sensation crept over my skin as it did whenever Gideon was close by.

“Time for bed.” He was so close, his warm breath billowed over my skin.

“Ummm.” I cleared my throat. “Would you like tea?”

“Oh, Kai, I would. So very much. I’ve been waiting for you to say yes.”

Huh? This guy must have a thing for tea. Weird. I swung around. He had a wide grin plastered on his face, and he extended a hand to my hip. I studied it, figuring I must not have read up on the tea ritual here in Tarrin. Not that I was complaining.

“Peppermint?”

His smile faded.

“Orange blossom?”

His face reddened, and he removed his hand. “Tea? You said tea.” He lowered his voice. “Forgive me. I thought you said me.”

Me? I asked if he wanted a hot drink, and he mistakenly thought I said me, not tea.

When I arrived in Martslock, I’d often wished to rewind time so I’d be happier or less



confused. But since falling for Dante, I'd done that less and less. Now, I begged the universe to go back, just a minute, and I'd agree. Me. Yes, he could have me.

Being human, I experienced a twinge of guilt because of Dante, even though he was more than okay with me, with us, having Gideon in our lives. But I would've preferred that he was here so I could tell him. Or maybe... maybe... he could have watched.

"You could." I studied my toes. In the coming months, the baby would grow so big, I wouldn't see my feet until after the birth.

"Have tea?" He sounded hopeful. Perhaps.

"Me." My voice was low enough that only a shifter could hear it.

Gideon lifted my chin, and I couldn't avoid his gaze. His eyes were... hungry. We'd eaten, so I hoped he was greedy not for more food but for... me.

His other hand moved over my hip, caressed my bump, and then slid between my legs. I gasped. My cock was semi-hard, but as he fondled it, blood flowed into it, making it hard as a freaking rock.

No more wasted time. I wanted this alpha's dick in me. I undid my paternity pants, and they puddled at my feet.

"Kai!" His eyes were no longer on my face. "Kai!"

"Yeah." I was so enjoying his reaction I leaned on the sink and shoved my hips forward.

"You're not wearing underwear."

“Oh nos!” I stuck a finger in my mouth. “Is that a crime in Tarrin? Naughty me.” After kicking off my pants, me and my hard cock toddled into the bedroom. I tossed off my shirt and lay on the bed, my legs spreadeagled. Gideon followed, his mouth so wide if I hadn’t been pregnant, I’d have pushed him onto the bed and stuck my dick in it.

“You’re so beautiful.” Gideon took his time removing his clothes.

“I’m so wet.” I licked around my mouth. “And your cock is...” Oh shit. He was freaking huge. Maybe bigger than Dante. “Big.” I gulped, glad I had more than enough slick so he could slide right in.

Gideon kneeled on the mattress, his huge length dangling between his legs, the tip brushing over the bedding. He crawled toward me as my chest heaved, anticipating him being inside me.

“I’m going to ride you.” I tapped my belly. “It’s more comfortable.”

He flopped onto the bed, but his dick didn’t flap or flop, it remained rigid, and it was all mine—or it soon would be.

“Help me.” I extended both hands, and he grabbed them as I straddled him, swaying my ass so the slick flesh coated his cock.

His nostrils flared as he let go of one hand. “Your hole. It’s small and tight, right?”

“You’ll see for yourself.” I rubbed my ass over his shaft, enjoying his breath speeding up and color spreading over his cheeks. When I was done teasing him, I told Gideon to grab his cock.

“You ready?” My raspy voice was barely loud enough for even a shifter to hear.

With my knees pressed into his sides, I lowered my butt, his cock sliding in until he was buried deep inside me. Gods, I took him all the way in. How was that possible? I paused, getting used to him filling and stretching me. It was a lot, but oh, so good.

Gideon moved both hands to my hips, his fingers pressing into my soft flesh, not hurting but teetering on the edge between pleasure and pain.

“Kai, I was wrong. Your hole and your channel are smaller and tighter than I imagined. ” He angled his hips so his cock pushed farther inside me. Desire forced my eyes closed, and surrounded by darkness, I concentrated on Gideon’s dick in me.

Sweat dotted my upper lip and dribbled onto my mouth and chest. I licked the salty liquid as I wriggled my butt, and both of us moaned. My fingers raced over his skin as heated blood hummed in my veins.

The distant sounds of Martslock traffic formed a background as I heaved myself up and opened my eyes, wanting to see Gideon as I plunged downward onto his length. Only the tip of his dick remained inside me as I hesitated just a tad before falling onto him.

“Gods, Kai,” he gasped. “Warn me next time.” He gulped huge mouthfuls of air when I raised myself up, his eyes fixed on his cock. I slid a finger over his dick, coated it in my slick and licked it.

Gideon’s eyes darted from between my legs to my mouth and back. I loved that he didn’t know where to look.

“Warning!” But a second later, I took all of his big, beautiful cock into my channel and sniggered when he hissed. He took my hand and licked off the remaining slick.

“Help me up.” Lifting me and the bump was an effort.

He gripped both my hands and hauled me up, only to have me sit on him again.

“Kai, I’ll come if you do that.”

I leaned forward, my cock pressing on his damp skin. “Isn’t that the point?”

“But I want this to last... forever.” The final word was so quiet I almost didn’t catch it. Gideon took hold of my length with one hand while helping me up with the other. He pumped my cock so I was being pummeled by a multitude of sensations.

Desire surged through my veins each time I took his cock inside me. Slick glided from my hole, down my thighs, and pooled on Gideon’s skin, coating my butt each time I took him in.

His breathing sped up and his eyes fluttered closed. His hand circled my length and pumped in time to his dick claiming my ass. A gripping sensation built in my tummy, and my body shuddered, desire threading through me. I hauled in a deep breath and paused, arching my back and enjoying the climax that was threatening to claim me.

I clawed at Gideon’s skin when the orgasm rippled through my body before building to a wave of pure pleasure. Cum spurted from my cock, and Gideon groaned, his hand clenching around my cock as he came, his knot filling me so completely.

## Page 18

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:39 pm*

There was no bliss quite like waking up with my mate, snuggled in close, my arms wrapped around him. If I could freeze time and live in one moment for the rest of my life, this would be it. His scent wrapped around me, his warmth against me, his soft breaths filling the air—absolute euphoria.

Last night had been better than I'd ever dreamed it could be. The way we connected had been so much more than just physical. We were made for each other, fate had already told us that. But this? Experiencing the way our bodies did the talking because our words couldn't? It was everything.

"You're awake." Kai's sleepy voice pulled me from my thoughts.

"Yeah." I kissed his shoulder. "I like snuggling with you in my arms."

"I like it too, but you have to let go now."

I pulled my arm back without hesitation. "Oh, sorry."

I hadn't thought about the fact that when the morning came, so would clarity. Did he regret cuddling with me? Or worse, did he regret the night before? I'd have understood if he did. That didn't mean I wouldn't hate it.

He climbed out of bed and padded off in the direction of the bathroom. To my surprise, he came back only a few minutes later, and instead of finding clothing, he climbed right back into bed, cuddling up to me, grabbing my hand and pulling my arm back around him.

“There. That’s better.”

It was for me too, much better. “I thought?—”

“You thought what?” He rolled over to face me, his hand cupping my cheek. “What did you think, mate?”

“I thought maybe you were regretting last night.” It was better to let it all out than it was to hold it in. This was complicated enough without me making it more so.

“No, silly. I don’t regret a single second with you. I just had to pee. Babies tend to do that to omegas.”

“Of course. Of course they do.” How quickly I jumped to conclusions. I kissed his forehead. “A good alpha would’ve gotten up and been feeding you already.”

And I’d thought about doing that when he’d still been asleep, but it was too perfect, lying there with him on our first morning together.

“You spent all of yesterday feeding me, Gideon. I think I’m good for now. I want to snuggle you a little bit longer, and then we can get up.”

I wasn’t going to argue with that. There was no place I’d rather be, and he was accurate, I had spent the entire day making sure he ate and ate and ate. Even though the baby was exactly the size they needed to be, hearing that he was too small had me in overdrive, doing things that wouldn’t even help them in the first place. I was ridiculous—ridiculously enamored with my mate, that was.

We both dozed in and out of sleep, ensconced in each other’s scents and arms. When my mate’s stomach growled, we had to get up. My bear wouldn’t allow me to keep him unfed any longer. There was no use explaining to him that grumbling tummies

weren't actually a sign of hunger. And really, it was closer to noon than I realized.

I'd already told work I'd be late, but the thought of going in at all was too much for me. I needed to let them know my half day was now going to be a full one. Shit, I might as well call the entire week off. I couldn't see my feelings changing any by tomorrow.

"I'm going to call in to work real quick, and then I'll find something for us to eat."

"Or... You can go take care of work, and I will make us pancakes."

"Thank you." I gave him a far-too-quick kiss. "Sounds like a brilliant plan."

By the time I used the bathroom and sent the message off, Kai was in the kitchen with a bowl of batter in front of him.

"What can I help you with?" I knew if I simply asked if he needed help, he'd tell me he was fine, just like I would do to him.

"Set the table?"

While he cooked the pancakes, I got the table ready, enjoying the domestic bliss that was making breakfast together. As much as I enjoyed it, I couldn't help but feel Dante's absence. It was weird how my feelings for him snuck up on me like that. It shouldn't have been a surprise. It was hardly an unusual thing for alphas who shared a mate to have feelings for one another. They were part of the same family, after all.

But this was more than that. I longed to kiss him, touch him, and suck him dry as our mate watched. There were probably a ton more things that the three of us needed to talk about.

Now wasn't the time for that. We needed all three of us here for that conversation.

I didn't know what happened to cause the shift or how Kai and I went from the slow lane to the race track, but it felt right, and even though guilt kept trying to worm its way in, I refused to let it take root.

And there was still Dante to consider. I knew he wouldn't be upset that I was with Kai, but he might've wanted to be there, at least for the first time. That wasn't something I would be able to fix. But all of that would have to wait for now.

We were having pancakes.

"These look delicious." I took the plates from him.

"You didn't even look at them. Either that or you lied."

I looked down at the plates again. They were lopsided, but that didn't make them look any less belly worthy.

"Nope. Still look delicious, but not nearly as delicious as the one who made them." I walked to the table, our meals in my hands, adding a tiny sway to my hips and loving the giggle that poured from his lips.



Dante burst through the door, and I flung myself into his arms.

“I missed you.”

He kissed me and sniffed my throat. “But you had company.”

“What?” I’d showered three times since Gideon and I had sex, and my mate could still scent him on me? How? I glowered at him, blaming his wolf for his super-charged senses. “Not sure what you’re talking about?”

Oops. I’d taken the “no clue” path, and that wasn’t the way to start our combined journey.

“Kai.” He bopped my nose. “There’s no need for fibs.”

“Fine.” I flopped into an armchair. “We... we... had sex. Gideon and me.” I studied my nails because they needed cutting.

“And how was it?”

“What?” My face burned, and I got up and stuck it under the kitchen faucet. Didn’t make any difference, so I shoved my head into the fridge, the blast of cool air a welcome relief to my inflamed cheeks.

“Is he good in bed? I bet his cock is huge.” Dante had followed me into the kitchen, but I scurried into the bedroom with him at my heels.

“You can’t ask me that!” I climbed into bed fully clothed and pulled the covers to my chin.

“I just did. Now spill. I want the deets.”

Weird had lost its meaning since I arrived in Tarrin, but this conversation was weird’s older brother hyped to the max. I pulled the bedding over my head.

“I know you’re there, Kai.”

“Just so I understand.” I removed the duvet. “You want me to describe putting part A into slot B?”

He frowned and mouthed, “Slot B?” He rubbed his brow. “Is that what humans in Pinedale call your hole? You’ve never used that expression since we met.”

I screwed up my face. My hole and channel were not slot B. Gross. But it was too difficult to explain it, and I was sorta surprised no one from Pinedale had ever used that expression when Dante was watching.

“Forget it. It was a joke.”

“Shove over.” He snuggled beside me, his hand stroking my thigh.

I giggled at that expression because I was pretty sure he’d picked it up from the show. I wasn’t sure when I’d started to refer to my former life as “the show,” and I went back and forth, calling it the before time or Pinedale, the series, and now finally thinking it was a TV show.

“Start at the beginning.”

“A long time ago, there was a big bang.”

Dante turned on his side. “Gideon came before he was inside you?” He pushed back his hair. “I thought he’d have more stamina.”

Oh, Dante. His mind went one way while mine was traveling in the opposite direction. “No, silly. I’m talking about the universe and the big bang theory.”

“I’m confused.”

He wasn’t the only one. We’d never talked about what kids were taught at school regarding the solar system and the universe, and this wasn’t the time to consider how Tarrin came to be.

I stoked my mate’s face. “Ignore me. I was being ridiculous.”

He quirked a brow. “Another human joke?”

“Yeah.” Note to self: Check the internet about how this world began.

“Can we get back to talking about Gideon’s cock and your hole?” He yanked off the covers. “And I need to see you, so can you get naked?”

Weird had morphed into unconventional, strange, and truly bizarre.

I lifted my arms and told him to remove my clothes. As I was pregnant, it was more comfortable to lie on my side.

“Did he fondle your cock when you got naked and tell you how big it was?” Dante stroked my shaft, and my breath quickened.

“He captured the pre-cum from the tip and swallowed it.” My mate’s fingers slid over my hip and trailed along my ass crack.

“What else did he do?” He patted around my puckered entrance and eased in a finger up to the first knuckle.

I whimpered, wanting him to finger-fuck me while I pictured Gideon fucking my mate.

“I was on top.” It was one of the positions I was comfortable in.

Dante got behind me, his arousal brushing over my butt. “Tell me more. Is his cock bigger than mine?”

Hmmm, didn’t Dante tell me he didn’t experience jealousy? Were he and Gideon going to measure their cocks and the winner would celebrate? What was the prize? Not me, I hoped.

“I just want to know how he fit inside you. You’re very small, Kai.”

“It was huge, and he had to go in all at once.”

“Like this?” He put the head in and paused, allowing me to pant while he stretched me.

“Did he play with your cock while he fucked you?”

“Mmmm.” It was hard to concentrate with Dante’s dick pushing into my channel, and I shivered at his feathery strokes on my length.

“But most importantly, did he make you scream when you came?” Dante eased in

and out of me in slow, even strokes.

“Oh yes, but what I want now is to stop talking about Gideon and enjoy your dick in me.” Dante filled me, and today, it was familiar and easy, whereas other times, it was fast, unpredictable and hot. Just how I liked it.

“One last question, I promise. While I’m fucking you, will you be thinking of him and his cock?”

“Yes!” I giggled, and he yelped, the vibration from my laughter probably making his body tingle. “Now fuck me, please.”

After we came and Dante washed me, we cuddled in bed. Instead of being conflicted and guilty, I was at peace. I loved two alphas, even though Gideon and I weren’t officially mates. Somehow, we had to work it out, but as Dante and the polar bear shifter were also into one another, did that make them mates too?

My mate was snoring gently beside me, so I’d ask him in the morning. I drifted off to sleep, dreaming of both their cocks in me at the same time.

Was that possible?

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:39 pm*

I couldn't believe I was here in bed with not only Kai, but also Dante. Kai was our sandwich center, and it was perfection. I didn't even mind that the bed was on the small side and my ass was right up to the edge. As long as the three of us fit, it was perfect.

Dante and I held hands across our mate's body. It was everything and more.

I thought back to how we got to be here—a pretty long road, to be sure. Growing up, I expected to find my mate, scent him, and then live happily ever after. Life didn't quite work that way for us. But this was better.

We truly got to know each other first, which was great. And not only did I have my mate, the one fate sent for me, but I also got myself a BOGO in the form of the sexy alpha sharing a bed with me.

The first time I called Dante a BOGO, Kai giggled. Gods, how wonderful it would be to bottle up that sound.

"You look really pensive over there," Dante said in a hushed tone. I hadn't even realized he was awake.

"No, not pensive," I replied. "I was just thinking about how happy I am to be here with you."

"That's not what I was thinking." He chuckled.

"Oh, yeah? What were you thinking?" This time it was Kai speaking. So much for us

being quiet.

“I was choreographing some shows for us to put on for you later. I get the sense that you like to watch, and if you do, well...”

I swallowed hard. Just envisioning our mate getting off on things the two of us did together had me ready to come. I rubbed my thumb on the back of his hand. “I have some ideas...”

“I can’t wait. Tell me what you’re thinking... in detail.” Kai rolled onto his back, so he could see both of us.

“I’m sorry we woke you, love.” Dante let go of my hand and reached for our mate’s. “We tried to be quiet.”

“Silly alpha, it wasn’t your voices that woke me up. You were both hard against me. It’s impossible to ignore something that sexy. Simply impossible. But now that we’re all awake, you can tell me what shows you were thinking of putting on.”

“There were many, many, many.” Dante tapped his nose playfully.

“Fine.” Kai pushed himself to sit up. “Can you reach inside that side table and give me my notebook and pencil?”

I didn’t really think about why he would want them as I grabbed the two items, but as soon as he opened up the notebook, all the reasons he might be wanting it hit me.

“You’re not seriously gonna write down our ideas, are you?” I asked.

“Making a list? Oh yeah, I’m absolutely doing that.” Kai tapped the paper with his pen.

“No?” Dante looked at him as if gauging whether or not he was teasing.

“Uh-huh. I’m practical. Pretty soon, I’m going to be so big, I’m not going to want to be doing much more than watching. Might as well have some input.” He winked.

I absolutely loved how open Kai was now that the three of us were figuring out the physical side in our relationship.

“If we’re going to do this, we might as well do this.” Dante put a pillow behind our mate’s back.

The three of us sat, backs against the headboard, and listed off different things we planned to do. I started with worshipping Dante’s cock, and we moved on from there. All three of our cocks were standing at attention from the get go. We didn’t let them distract us from our mission. We filled one page and then another. I’d never called myself a creative person before, but after some of the ideas that flowed from my lips, I was reassessing that.

“Okay, so now that we have this checklist, maybe we should make another one,” I suggested.

“I like the idea of that. Wait, what would the other one be?” Kai asked, looking at each of us.

Dante answered for us. “Why, of course, it’s the list of things that we’re going to do to you and with you and for you.”

His face was burning bright. I enjoyed seeing him embarrassed like that. A lot. I could only imagine the dirty thoughts he had running through his sexy mind.

“I was thinking we could start with you using our mouths. Dante at his needy hole



and me at his cock. We could have a contest, to see which of us could make him moan the loudest.” I watched Kai’s face as I spoke.

“It would be difficult to tell, with both of us giving it our all at the same time. What if we can’t determine if it’s a tie or not?” Dante’s hands were wrapped around his cock. I fucking loved it.

“I suppose, in case of a tie, we’ll have to go again... and again... and again. Can you see it? Both of us racing to see who can get him to come first.” Dante stroked himself.

Kai’s head fell back against the headboard with a thump.

“Are you two trying to kill me?” Kai’s voice cracked, his neediness so close to the surface.

“Why would we do that?” Dante licked his lips. “We love to see you come undone.”

“And that’s how you’ll kill me. Death by orgasm.”

“Is that even possible?” I sassed.

“Yep, it’s a thing. And it’s exactly how I plan to go.” Kai reached down and smacked Dante’s hand away from his cock playfully. “And this is mine.” He wrapped his hand around him and gave a jerk. “If only someone were here to help me... someone here with a magical tongue.”

I settled my body between Dante’s legs, my mouth close to his cock. “Will this one do?”

“I think it just might. Let’s make our alpha come.”

I wasn't going to argue with that.

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:39 pm*

“The three of us can’t live in this small apartment with a baby.”

Gideon was adamant, and while I secretly agreed with him, it wasn’t his decision to make. Or it was, but Dante and I had to agree. That was how this relationship worked, especially since this place was Dante’s. It was where he lived while forging his career, and he’d brought me here when I was scared and confused.

“It is small, and we could do with at least one more bedroom.” I glanced at Dante as I spoke. “For me to use as an office.” There wasn’t much space in the living area, and both Dante and Gideon were tall. The space would be crowded with baby paraphernalia. Add one omega and two alphas and we’d be sidling past one another and apologizing for bumping into the other person.

“Four.” Gideon held up four fingers. “We each need a room for privacy, and the baby must have a nursery.”

I tapped a finger on my lips as I pondered what the polar bear shifter had said. The point to us being together was that we were... with one another, not alone in our separate rooms.

“Why four?” That would be an unnecessary expense, and while the three of us worked, babies weren’t cheap. And with a smaller place, we could save for a deposit and buy a home one day.

“Four people. Four bedrooms.” Dante wasn’t questioning Gideon’s suggestion, and again, I was the outsider.

The pair, born in Tarrin, seemed to get the other's intention, and I was left with many questions. We'd been here before with them on one side of an issue and me on the other. Damn it.

Gideon put his hands on my shoulders. "You adored your grandparents, didn't you?" What sort of question was that? He was trying to change the subject. But I mumbled a yes. "And yet, did you ever retreat to your room, wanting to be alone, craving privacy?"

I thought back, and tears pricked my eyes. I had, because as much as I loved them, I loved myself too and needed time to collect my thoughts and just be, with no one expecting something from me.

"Wanting time to yourself has nothing to do with how much you love us." Dante came up behind me and cradled my bump.

"Okay. Four bedrooms." I rested my head on Gideon while placing a hand over my wolf shifter's.

Dante and Gideon scoured the for-rent sites on the internet. An app would have been easier, but no, the techies of Tarrin were not there yet. I used pregnancy as an excuse for not searching, because other than the subway, café, park, mall, and Dante's office, I knew little about Martslock.

"This one might do." Dante tapped the computer screen. "It says no pets." Gideon giggle-snorted, but it must have been a joke only Tarrin citizens understood. We didn't have a puppy or kittens. Not even a parrot or a cuddly bunny.

"Can someone explain that to me, please?" I could blame baby brain, but it was more like Pinedale mind.

“They’re referring to our beasts.”

“What?” I swiveled my butt so I was facing them. “That’s terrible. They can’t get away with that. We need to sue.” I was met with blank expressions. The landlord must have been human, like me. But not like me, because they belonged here.

My bottom lip trembled as I asked, “Is discrimination allowed in Tarrin?” Maybe I didn’t want our baby growing up here.

“No. It’s a message to shifters that they don’t allow shifting inside.” Gideon blew me a kiss.

“Big beasts can wreck a room, causing huge damages. Shifters who can’t control their animals would be hit with a big bill if they shifted inside.” Dante grinned, his head tilted to the side as he did when we had Tarrin/Pinedale misunderstandings.

“Okay.” One misunderstanding solved. A million more to go. Perhaps our child could translate and get me out of awkward situations when they got older.

“It would be five subway stops from your work and seven for me.” Gideon peered at the screen. “It’s doable.”

“But it’s on the third floor and there’s no elevator, so we can cross that off the list.” Dante sighed, and they resumed their search while I sipped iced tea and chatted to the baby who was awake and wriggling.

After two hours, my alphas had a list of five possible rentals. Buying a house would have been nice, but they were farther away from the city center and also out of our price range.

They made arrangements with the realtor to visit tomorrow, Sunday, and said I could

stay home and they'd send me pics.

“Thanks, but I’m pregnant, not deathly ill. I’m coming.” I was lucky to not have to traipse to work every day like most other pregnant omegas did. And I had two guys at home doing the chores and catering to my every whim.

But that night, I didn’t sleep well, tossing and turning, dreaming of houses with gaping floors that swallowed me, and tentacles extending from the walls that wrapped around me, choking the air from my lungs. Dante slept on the sofa, and Gideon still had his place, so he still slept there most nights.

In the wee hours of the morning, I woke up and couldn’t go back to sleep. Refusing to look out the bedroom window at the city lights, in case the world blurred and shimmered, I sat up and tried to figure out what was on my mind.

In the first few weeks after I arrived here, I had trouble sleeping, but Dante was always in the room. Glancing around at the furniture and pictures on the walls, it hit me that I was scared of letting go of the familiar. I was surrounded by things I’d touched and scented and looked at countless times and memorized.

And it was going to be taken away from me.

The door opened, and Dante strode to the bed. “Is something wrong?”

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:39 pm*

Dante and I had a really long conversation about our move. It was necessary. That wasn't a question. But even though Dante had been in that apartment longer than Kai, it represented stability to Kai in a way it didn't—couldn't—for us.

Kai had been through so much in coming here. His entire world had literally been yanked out from under him as he was thrust into ours. He was still learning about his new life and the differences between here and his old home. I couldn't pretend to be sad that it happened. It was fate bringing me my mate, but I did hate that it often caused him stress.

And now, here he was, very pregnant, and we were asking him to accept some big changes again. Moving was a big deal for anyone. You took the place that you had felt safe in and bid it farewell, starting over in a new place with new quirks and new neighbors. And we were talking about doing it while he was pregnant. Just because it was necessary didn't mean that it didn't suck. It did. Big time.

Dante and I made a pact that we would wait until we found something absolutely perfect, something we knew that Kai loved completely, before making any decision. We refused to settle. And if that meant we were in tight quarters until after the baby came, then so be it. That was how it was going to be.

We wanted what was best for our mate, and yanking him from the place he felt most secure and tossing him into all-new surroundings he wasn't in love with wasn't going to happen. Not on our watch.

The day had come that the three of us had to head out and look at potential places. When we arrived, the renter's agent had bad news for us.

“Nothing on your list is available any longer.” She held a stack of papers in her hands. “I did make up a potential new list.”

“What do you mean none of them are available? Why didn’t you call us?” Kai was pissed, and I didn’t blame him. Why set up an appointment if you were going to bait-and-switch us like this?

“Because you are my first appointment today, and when I checked the site this morning, all of yesterday’s pendings populated, and sadly, that included all of your places. The market is moving very quickly at the moment. If you want a place, there is no dawdling.”

I hated the idea of that. This was a life-altering decision. This wasn’t something to just spontaneously jump into. Signing a lease because you had a fear of missing out would only lead to regret. I understood why she said what she did. It was her job to say it like it was. Sure, there was a component of her wanting to make money, but I detected no lies. If we waited too long to decide to look at something, we might not be able to. That was the sad reality of it.

She led us to her desk, and we went over some paperwork, including making her officially our renter’s agent and listening to our legal rights as potential renters. She also told us what to expect during this process and let us see the listings for the places she was taking us to.

A few of them required additional flood insurance on top of rental insurance, which meant we didn’t want any part of them. Not only was the insurance over-the-top expensive, but it meant that there had been flooding in the recent past. None of us were up for that.

One of them had a community association to answer to, and Dante hard passed that before I was able to. We didn’t want someone telling us what color our curtains could



be or which plants were suitable to have in our flower boxes. We also didn't want the added fees, not with rent so high already.

Very quickly, we whittled the pile of listings down to only a few places, and they were fine, nothing great. I did have to give it to our renter's agent; even though not all of the price points were exactly where we wanted them, all of the places had most of what we asked for. She wasn't asking us to sacrifice a bedroom or a bathroom in order to get the type of neighborhood we wanted or a basement.

One by one, we visited the homes, and one by one, we were unimpressed. And when we got to the final place, Kai started to act weird. I couldn't even place what that weird was. He was just off.

"Hey, are you okay?" I asked, giving his hand a squeeze.

"Yeah, why?" he replied, not meeting my eyes.

"You just feel off." And the more I looked at him, the more worried I became.

"No, it's fine. I'm just over this. Can we just go?" he said, turning to Dante, who nodded.

"Yeah, sure. We don't have to do this today. Where would you like to go?" I hadn't missed that he didn't ask to go home. He asked to go. They were two different things.

He leaned his head against my chest. "Maybe you could take me to your mountain?"

"Yeah, I'd like that."

The three of us said goodbye to the realtor, promised her we'd call and set up another appointment, and we drove out to where my bear liked to roam.

“It’s beautiful here.” Dante stared out the side window as I drove up the dirt road to where I planned to park.

“It’s my bear’s favorite place. In the summer, the water gets warm enough to swim in our skin, but today, it is fur-only weather.”

“We can swim another time.” Kai reached up and placed his hand on my shoulder. “Today, I just want to snuggle your beasts. Is that okay?”

“Yeah,” Dante answered for us. “Our animals would love that.”

After we reached the clearing, Dante shifted into his wolf first. He was absolutely stunning. I took my fur next, watching Kai’s face as I did. I was large—extremely large, and I didn’t want to frighten him. In his eyes, I saw anything but fear.

Kai hugged us both, telling Dante’s wolf he missed him and my bear that he was even more stunning than he had imagined. My bear was overflowing with joy.

If only Kai was, too.

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:39 pm*

I was in the middle, wedged between my mates.

But I was hot and bad-tempered, wanting to kick them out of the bed and have it all to myself. Instead of kicking, I nudged Dante close to the edge and shuffled closer to Gideon, pushing him away with my bump.

Nothing worked, and I was still overheated and unable to fall asleep.

“Want to talk about it?” Dante flipped over, and the mattress sagged. I heaved myself around to face him—not so easy when lugging around a hugely pregnant belly.

“I’m hot.”

“We know.” Gideon flipped over and flung an arm over my hip.

“Not that sort of hot.” I giggled.

“We can leave,” my wolf shifter mate suggested.

“No.” I grabbed their hands so they wouldn’t get out of bed. “Something is bugging me, like it did at the last place we looked at.”

“Is it a cock?” Gideon’s lips trailed kisses over my neck while he rubbed his arousal over my ass.

“What? No. It’s not something physical. It’s a scent or a presence or a warning of an impending storm.”

Dante checked his phone. “The internet says we’ll have blue skies for the next few days.”

“Not literal rain and hail, just something disturbing our lives.”

Dante put a hand on my belly. “It’s the baby, Kai. You’re getting ready to give birth.”

While I was close to my due date, the sensation that prickled over my skin wasn’t baby-related.

“We’re going to be dads.” Dante’s body jiggled as it always did when he was anticipating something positive.

“Me too.” Gideon’s voice had lost the hesitation it used to have when he spoke of my and Dante’s baby. We were a family, and our baby would have three fathers. Not unusual in Tarrin. It had taken me a while to get used to it, but now I embraced our family of three, soon to be four.

An idea niggled at me, reminding me of a cat brushing against my leg or a puppy anxious to be picked up. The sensation I experienced in the last house we looked at was similar to when I’d scented Gideon and Dante, though my instinct was dulled when I met my wolf shifter. I’d been panicking and didn’t pick up on what the universe was telling me because I’d been plonked in a different world!

Even though I was heavily pregnant—or maybe because of my condition—my body was alerting me that I had another mate in Tarrin. I closed my eyes and imagined a room full of mates, a harem, all of them devoted to me. But I shook away the idea. I was content with Dante and Gideon. But did I have a choice or had the universe made it for me?

I had two alphas in my life. Wasn’t that enough?

Yes, yes, a thousand times yes. And yet, the more I thought about a third mate, the more I was convinced there was one waiting for me.

“Should we call the midwife?” Dante scrolled through his phone, even though we’d elected to have a home birth with just the three of us present.

“No, my water hasn’t broken, and I have no contractions.” Dante helped me out of bed, and I headed to the bathroom. While I washed my hands, I considered whether to bring up the idea of a third alpha in our lives with my two loves. They’d been accepting of our arrangement—more than that because they loved one another as they adored me—but they’d never mentioned an omega having three mates.

But as I’d learned, they assumed I knew more about Tarrin than I did, so it wasn’t that they deliberately held back vital information.

“Want some tea?” Gideon was in the kitchen when I emerged. I agreed and crawled into bed. Dante was reading, so none of us was going back to sleep soon. He placed pillows behind me when our polar bear shifter handed me my tea. “I have something to tell you.”

“The baby’s coming. I knew it.” Dante and Gideon high-fived over my head, and I rolled my eyes. My two Mr. Know-It-Alls were irritating me, leaping ahead without waiting for me to speak.

“No!” The baby was content to stay inside me for now. “At the last house, I wasn’t myself.”

Gideon peered under the covers. “Who were you?” He and Dante guffawed, and I growled, my best impression of a polar bear, or maybe it was a wolf. They were giddy with anticipation of becoming dads.

“There might be someone else lurking about.”

Gideon jumped out of bed and peered out the window. “I’ll set my bear on him wherever he is.”

Gods, give me the strength not to shout at my mates. “A third person.”

“Three people?” Dante joined Gideon at the window. “We can shift and chase them away.”

I told them to get back in bed. “Another mate. It’s a shifter, I can sense him.”

“Oh!”

“Oh!”

“Are those good ohs, bad ohs or something in between?” I asked as I placed a hand in their laps. “Is it possible to have three alphas and an omega in a relationship?”

“My cousin is in a similar relationship,” Gideon announced.

“It’s not as common as two alphas, but it does happen.” Dante rubbed his chin.

“Whether it happens a lot or rarely, I think that’s what this is.” The more I spoke about it, the more I was convinced there was another alpha waiting for me. Maybe he was searching for me tonight, and that was why I couldn’t sleep.

The outside world tempted me to take a peek behind the curtains, but I was scared the universe might have other plans and take me elsewhere.

“How do I find him? Do I explore Martslock and hope he picks up my scent?”

My mates were no help and shrugged, but Gideon shared a glance with Dante. Those two were up to something and weren't telling me.

“We’re going to need a bigger house,” they said in unison.

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:39 pm*

It broke my heart to see Kai so frazzled, upset, and torn up at the scent of his new mate. He'd come such a long way from the time he first scented me. At least this time, he understood what he was feeling and didn't think the poor guy was a stalker. Maybe he didn't fully get it, but definitely more than the first time.

But what could we do about it? It was a home for sale. A thousand people had probably been through there just since we left and who knew how many more before then.

"It's like going on a wild goose chase in the desert." Kai sighed, his frustration evident. "Why did I have to scent someone in a house that was for sale? It wasn't even that we ran into him at his job after he was done working for the day. That would be easy. We could just go back to that place and wait for him."

He'd obviously been playing the game of "what if" in his mind. That game had no winners. None. And with the market the way it was, he was right. Who knew how many people had walked through there. Probably a bazillion or two.

But we had to try, and we promised our mate we would do exactly that. He asked us how we could be willing to do this, willing to help him find yet another alpha. The answer was simple.

"Because we love you." Dante pulled him into a hug.

"And besides." I wrapped them both in my arms. "BOG-two is the best deal going around." At least that got a chuckle out of my mate.



First thing the next morning, we all walked into the realtor's office. This wasn't the kind of thing we'd be able to do over the phone. She might've been a shifter, but that didn't mean she understood enough of what Kai would be going through to break the rules. And there was no way what we were going to ask her for wasn't against some rules and possibly a few laws. We wanted client information. And then there was the very real possibility it wasn't even her client to begin with.

Had it not been our only option, we wouldn't have put her in that position. It wasn't fair to her. But it was more unfair to our mate to let him suffer this way. And there would never be a day I picked anyone over my mate. Not a single one.

"Oh, did you guys change your mind on one of the places?" she asked brightly.

That ended quickly when we told her why we were there.

"The last place we were in, we scented someone, someone we need to get in contact with. We were hoping to get a list of names from you." Dante did the speaking, which was good, because I wouldn't have been as polite. Our mate was hurting, and he was getting very close to giving birth. We needed this figured out before he did, and I didn't have time for niceties.

"Oh, I can't give you that kind of information. I'm not sure why you thought I could. If they did something wrong, the police are your best option," she said.

She'd completely misread the room.

"We're not looking for someone who did something wrong," Kai's voice squeaked. "I scented my mate... one of them, anyway."

Her mouth formed a circle, and she walked back over to her desk and started typing away at her computer. "I can't tell you anything, but if you happen to look over my

shoulder? Really, there's nothing I could do about that, is there?"

We went and stood behind her. She tapped away, looking at the list of disclosures that were requested yesterday. Thankfully, the house in question was part of her agency. It wasn't one of her listings, but she had all sorts of records in the system that unaffiliated realtors wouldn't have access to.

"This is weird. It looks like you were the only people who had been there this month, aside from the agent tour and the owner, that is."

"Agent tour?" I asked, completely clueless about what that was.

"Yeah, it's when we have an open house, but instead of inviting possible renters or buyers, we invite all the agents from local agencies to come and look around. It will help them pair it up with one of their clients better than a regular listing could." She pushed back her chair.

"I thought places went faster than that." Wasn't that why she told us we had to pounce on anything close to what we wanted before someone else did?

"That's the weird thing. We don't really do them that often anymore, not with the market the way it is." She went back to tapping away on her keyboard. "Oh, it looks like this house started the lease process three times and has had each of them fall through. That's probably why they had the agent tour. It's not telling me why they fell through, though. Probably didn't pass the final credit or background check or something." Whatever that meant.

"So we have to go to all the agencies?" Kai asked. He wasn't mad about it. If anything, he sounded a thousand times more hopeful than he had since we left the house in question.

“You can. But for this, I can give you a list of the agents that were there. They’re not clients, so there’s no client privilege.”

She printed them out. “I don’t know if they’ll do you any good, either, but it’s worth a try.”

“Wait a second.” She took the list back. “Let me cross off the ones I know it’s not.”

“How do you know what to cross off? Fate doesn’t really give us who we think we should have or anything like that. It’s not a science.” I didn’t want her knocking off anyone only to discover they were the one.

“No, but I’m pretty sure that fate’s not going to give you an 80-year-old man,” she said, crossing one off.

She had me there.

“A woman?” she asked, and Kai shook his head.

“Okay then, here’s a bunch more. I’d cross off the assholes, too, but fate gives them mates as well.” She chuckled.

“Some of them are assholes?” Kai asked, his apprehension close to the surface.

“I was teasing,” she replied.

I wasn’t sure she was, but I was glad that she told him so. “Here you go. Any with the green star next to them are closed today. Someone in their office might be able to help you, though.”

I wanted to hug her. She gave us so much more information than we had hoped for.

“Thank you.”

“I hope you find him,” she said. “And when you do, we should reevaluate what size place you need.”

I didn’t even think she was kidding.

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:39 pm*

It was two a.m., and I was awake again, unable to sleep.

But it was more than tossing and turning and being overheated. I was determined to find my third mate and had to return to where I'd scented him. The house we'd inspected.

I crawled out of bed, pleased I'd told Dante to sleep in the middle so I wouldn't disturb him by getting up to pee. The baby was pressing on my bladder, so I spent most of the night and day running to the bathroom, and the rest of the time, on my back in bed or on the couch. My bump was so big I had to peer over the top when watching TV.

Not wanting to waste time getting dressed, I pulled a hoodie and track pants over my PJs, grabbed my phone and wallet, and tiptoed to the door. But I paused with my fingers grasping the handle. My belly tightened, and I bent forward, pressing my other hand on the door.

What was I doing wandering around in the middle of the night, alone? In a city I barely knew? But I'd been to the house we inspected, and Dante had put the address in my phone, in case I got lost.

Gideon told him that was silly because 1) where would I go, and 2) if I wandered away, they would scent me. Dante gave himself a nuggie, something he'd seen on *The Secret Lives of Pinedale*. My friends used to do that to me, and I giggled while Gideon rolled his eyes and gave Dante a bear hug.

Out on the street, I wrapped my arms around myself. Not because it was cold—it

wasn't—but because I'd never been on Martslock's streets in the middle of the night. Not even with my shifter mates.

There were few people on the street, but with the hoodie and my face in shadow, no one recognized me. It was odd that now, when fewer fans knew who I was, I was disappointed not to be constantly asked for autographs.

But I kept my head down, fearful of someone trying to steal my wallet, not that the city had much crime according to Dante. Maybe because in their spare time, everyone was watching TV.

I approached a taxi stand and showed the driver the address. He told me to get in. Driving through the darkened streets, I almost told him to turn around, and after five minutes in the back seat, I'd nibbled, bitten, and torn my nails.

A cramp gripped my stomach, and I grunted. The driver studied me in the rearview mirror and asked if he should take me to a hospital.

“I have a few weeks until my due date.”

He pulled up outside the house, and in the middle of the night, the house didn't appear bright, cheerful, and welcoming. Instead, the shadows cast by the tall streets gave off a sinister, menacing vibe.

The driver peered at the house with its For Rent sign in the front yard. “Are you sure this is the place?”

“Y-Y-Yes.” But I made no move to get out until the driver opened his door and the unmistakable scent of an alpha wafted into the car. I fumbled with the door, cursing at my clumsiness and anxious to race into the house. But there was no one living in the building.

Why was I here? Because this was the only place I'd scented my third mate. It was a start and an end. If he'd scented me after I left the other day, he might come back. Perhaps he'd left a note.

"Do you want me to wait?" I paid the driver as my stomach cramped again, and I leaned on the car and waited until it passed.

"I don't have enough cash on me." I hadn't thought this through and would have to contact my mates to come get me.

"I'm at the end of my shift, so I'll stay for ten minutes."

I thanked him and breathed through the pain in my belly. He opened his mouth as if to say something but snapped it shut, and I brushed past him.

"There's a light on inside."

He was right. In the kitchen. It was possible one of the realtors had flicked it on during the day and forgotten to turn it off.

I trod carefully over the grass and up the path. Did I ring the doorbell or go around the side of the house to the back door? Unlike when I met Gideon, I wasn't afraid of the alpha's scent but welcomed it as it drew me in. If there was no one in the house, I'd scribble a message, but I had to find out.

The scent had captured me, as if I were walking the plank on a pirate ship. There was no way back, only forward to my fate. Instead of waiting at his vehicle, the driver followed me. He was a sweetheart, making sure I was safe.

A stream of light fell on the grass, and I stepped into it, shading my eyes as I looked at the window, hoping my mate would appear. But the door flung open and both me and the driver gasped. He took my arm and leaped in front of me.

“Don’t come any closer,” the driver warned.

The man’s face was masked by shadows, but it wasn’t necessary to know his name or what he looked like, though I was curious about the size of his cock.

“It’s okay. He’s my?—”

“Mate.” The alpha walked onto the deck, but I still couldn’t see his face.

“Young people today,” the driver muttered. “Meeting their mate in the middle of the night.” He stalked toward the car, saying over his shoulder, “I’ll be going.”

“No, don’t.” I bent over, a contraction tightening my belly. Oh gods, I needed Dante and Gideon.

“I’m here.” My new mate was at my side, holding me up.

“My water just broke. I’m in labor!”

Find out what happens in the dramatic conclusion...

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I thought I hit the jackpot with my wolf mate. He is kind, protective, and exactly who I need in my life. And then one day—poof, I run into my bear mate and the three of us make it work. I’m happier than I ever dreamed possible.

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Fate disagrees and sends me Seymour, just in time to help deliver my baby. Now I have to balance my life as a father of a newborn while I begin my life with my new dragon mate, and keep the life I have with my wolf and bear from falling apart. Easy



peasy... or more likely the most difficult thing I've ever done.

Met My Dragon And Went Into Labor is the final book in the sweet with knotty heat, light, novel-esque MM+ mpreg romance series: Reborn In Another World. It features a pregnant omega discovering that his fated mates might be two of three, his alpha dragon mate who delivers his baby the day they meet, an alpha wolf and bear shifter ready for their new lives as fathers, and an unexpected pregnancy. This isekai style story introduces a third mate, one Kai will gladly share. While mpreg is possible in this omegaverse series and ends with a delivery or two, not all books will feature a new baby (this one will have two). If you like your omegas strong, your alphas hawt, and your mpreg with heart, download your copy today.